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The American Conservative

Living in the Bubble

America's Coming Mortgage Crisis



Raimondo on the Peace Movement

Rychlak on Goldhagen

Buchanan on North Korea

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CONSERVATIVE NEWS AND INFORMATION

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[ALLIES]

VIVE LA FRANCE

At the United Nations, French diplomats are now openly working to deny the U.S. Security Council cover for an attack on Iraq. While the War Party spits out tired insults about Gallic weakness, Paris seems to us a wise ally, trying to prevent an old friend from acting against her deeper interests. Rather like the drunk who was denied the car keys, we suspect that America will one day be grateful if Paris succeeds in pushing us back from a looming, self-inflicted catastrophe.

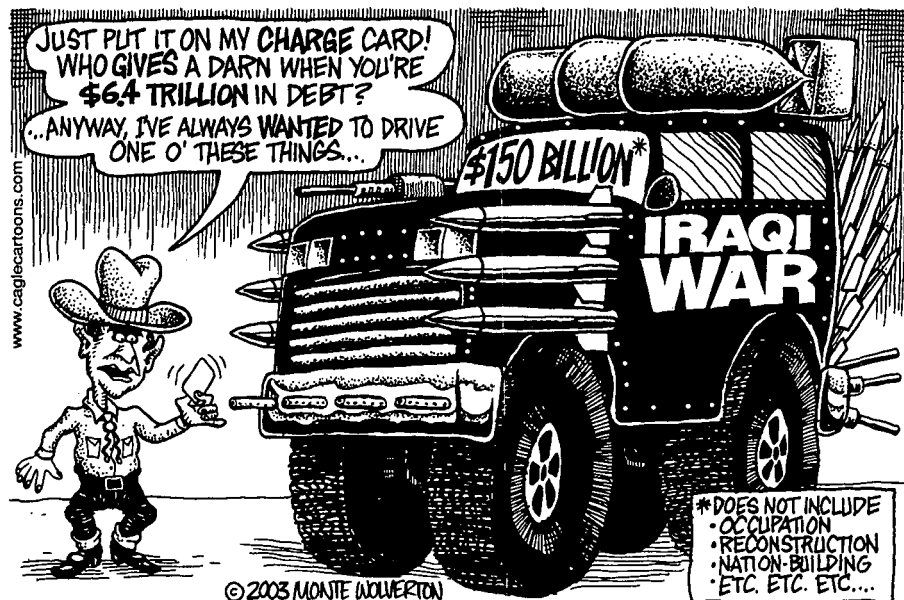
[RACE]

THE MICHIGAN COMPROMISE

In his remarks on the University of Michigan affirmative action case, President Bush said programs that privilege any race are "divisive, unfair, and impossible to square with the Constitution." He then nearly cancelled out this conservative truth by advancing the delusion that federally-enforced diversity breeds cultural health. Translation: different means, same end.

The Michigan cases—*Gratz v. Bollinger* (at the undergraduate level) and *Grutter v. Bollinger* (against the law school)—are an airtight indictment against affirmative action. A pair of white students, Jennifer Gratz (GPA 3.8, ACT 25) and Patrick Hamacher (GPA 3.32, ACT 28) were denied admission. At the time, according to the plaintiffs' brief, Michigan's guidelines called for "the acceptance of all under-represented minority applicants with [their] credentials."

In 1997, Barbara Grutter, a white mother of two, applied to Michigan's law school with a 3.8 GPA and 161 out of 180 LSAT score. Among law school applicants with a grade point average between 2.75 and 2.99, four out of four African-American applicants were accepted that year. But not one of the 14



white applicants in the same range was admitted. Among applicants in the 3.0 to 3.24 GPA bracket, seven of eight African-Americans were accepted compared to only two of 42 white applicants.

The evidence argues its own case. President Bush did not postpone a public statement because he doubted the merits. He needed time to craft a compromise—and the result is double-edged. In language familiar to the Right, he denounced affirmative action strongly enough to fortify his base. Message: Bush Opposes Quotas. He then launched a paean to diversity to assure the rest that he's still a *compassionate* conservative: "Our institutions of higher education should reflect our diversity..." etc.

The Bush have-it-both-ways plan calls for nationalizing the approach he and brother Jeb tried on the state level. They guaranteed college admission to top students in all high schools, including those in minority areas. The resultant blend satisfied multicultural benchmarks without obvious quota-filling. So in sum, we're left with a denunciation of race-based policy and a celebration of race-based outcomes. Though not a rout for

conservatives, it would have been a better day for the home team if President Bush had stopped sooner in his speech and made excellence, not color, the arbiter in American education.

[SOVEREIGNTY]

FRIENDS LIKE THESE

Spying by allies may be an unfortunate fact of geopolitical life but it would be really pushing it for those same allies to send not just ordinary spooks but secret death squads into the United States. According to a recent UPI report, this is exactly what Israel intends to do.

Until now, Tel Aviv has refrained from dispatching Kidon squadrons (elite assassination units of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency) to friendly countries, knowing that none of her allies welcomed their presence. But now, Ariel Sharon and his hawkish new intelligence chief, Meir Dagan, have ruled such objections immaterial. The result: Americans may soon be in harm's way.

The Mossad's record with such missions does not reassure. In 1974, an Israeli team in Norway tried to eliminate Ali Hassan Salemeh, ringleader of the

Munich Olympics bloodbath, but killed a Moroccan waiter by mistake. Occasionally, it is unclear whether the intended victims are really terrorists at all. Such was the case with Dr. Thabet Thabet (felled by a sniper's bullets in December 2000), whom the Israeli government accused of running a guerrilla cell. The Israeli peace movement disagreed, calling him a partner in their cause. And sometimes the scoundrel whacked by the Mossad is our scoundrel. Salameh, whom Israeli assassins finally caught up with in 1976, had become a valued CIA informant.

Carrying out such operations inside America's borders would constitute an outrageous breach of sovereignty and a threat to America's national interest and citizens. President Bush should state, without further delay or equivocation, that Tel Aviv's death squads have no place on American soil.

[NEOCONS]

CHARLES MARTEL, CALL YOUR OFFICE

What passes for movement conservatism these days never ceases to astonish. Recently *National Review Online* published a call for the European Union to open its doors to Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco: North Africa has "beautiful beaches" while the young Muslim populations of North Africa would solve Europe's problem of an aging population, according to the argument.

The difficulties Europe might have in assimilating a Muslim population of 250 million were of little concern to the author (Amir Taheri), but you'd think someone at NRO would take note of the riots in England's cities, the spate of synagogue burnings in France, the fatwas European Muslim clerics issue against the authors of books that displease them, all the product of friction between Europe and a Muslim population influx one tenth the size of what NRO proposes.

We know that *National Review* has changed a great deal since the days it was edited by Bill Buckley and (later) John O'Sullivan, and it's been a long time since its editors grappled with subjects like *Suicide of the West*. But we hadn't quite realized the degree to which it was bidding for the role of Dr. Kevorkian.

[SUBURBIA]

BEHEMOTH

Greg Easterbrook's outstanding *New Republic* piece about SUVs ("Axle of Evil") arrives at the same time that trendy Hollywood is beginning to agitate against these vehicles, and environmental extremists are trying actually to destroy them. For at least some conservatives, such a backlash is long overdue. During the 2000 Buchanan campaign, some staffers referred to the proliferating behemoths as "suburban assault vehicles" (and what a nice shock of recognition it was to find that not all right-wingers were anti-environmentalist zealots and opponents of highway safety).

Easterbrook—drawing on Keith Bradsher's book *High and Mighty*—describes how for a generation Detroit was able to procure fuel economy and air quality loopholes from Congress for these top-heavy, gas guzzling "light trucks" and market them to affluent baby boomers as a mark of rugged individualism and a weapon against mid-life crises. The Motor City no longer makes station wagons, once the mainstay of the large American family.

Something has gone out of whack when it has become impossible to light up a Marlboro in a bar for fear that someone might catch a whiff of secondhand smoke, but you can receive a tax break for acquiring a 12-mile-per-gallon vehicle that is difficult to control, likely to kill or maim whomever you crash into, and consumes vast quantities of a resource precious enough to drive us to war. ■

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Richard Perle Must Resign

When this magazine was still in its infancy, a friend stopped by our sparse editorial offices to offer a gift: a poster reading, "Draft Richard Perle!" We laughed heartily, installed it prominently, then went on about our business. So did Mr. Perle.

Though his chairmanship of the Defense Policy Board affords him only an advisory role, Perle has made himself shadow spokesman for the Bush administration. His goal is single—the establishment of American empire—and his tactics could not be more subversive of the national interest. When the prudent impulses of Colin Powell gain a toehold in the presidential psyche, Perle predictably surfaces to assure a hungry press that his war is still on. *Iraq delenda est.*

When German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder expressed antiwar sentiments, Perle fired back, "Germany has been subsidized into a moral numbing pacifism" and took it upon himself to call for the chancellor's resignation. Of the French, delicately courted by Powell in an effort to win Security Council support, Perle blustered, "I have seen diplomatic maneuver but not moral fiber." By his estimation, the whole European continent "has lost its moral compass." With the exception of Britain, ostensibly given a pass because of Tony Blair's hawkishness, "Europeans prefer to look the other way or cut deals with Saddam or buy him off in various ways."

Why such venom from this leader of the opposition to the opposition? Reluctant allies will slow his crusade, and Mr. Perle has an empire to build—preferably before afternoon tea. "If we just let our vision of the world go forth, and we embrace it entirely, and we don't try to piece together clever diplomacy, but just wage a total war," he says with a blend of Napoleonic bluster and visionary zeal, "Our children will sing great songs about us years from now." Thus Perle's play for history, casting himself in the hero's role. So runs the plot of his forgettable Cold War thriller, *Hard Line*, in which a solo Pentagon official, hemmed in by timid bureaucrats, saves the country from a disarmament deal.

This time, Perle does not battle alone. The "generalissimo of the Cakewalk Corps," as columnist Mary McGrory called him, has planted his neocon protégés in key Pentagon and think tank posts. Their network is extensive, but most bidding to lead Perle's war know more about knot-

ting ties than lacing on boots. They cannot face down Gen. Powell's measured realism. Neither can they match the statesmen's credentials of Brent Scowcroft, the elder Bush's National Security Advisor, who maintains, "An attack on Iraq at this time would seriously jeopardize, if not destroy, the global counterterrorist campaign."

So they are left selling unjustified war to a public increasingly disinclined to line up behind. New polling data shows just 23 percent of Americans support an invasion based on current evidence. No problem for Richard Perle. He has already served notice that the outcome of weapons inspections is inconsequential. Ditto international support. "Our European allies are just not relevant to this," he told ABC's "This Week." Of the Security Council, he says, "It would be a great mistake to become dependent on it and take the view that we can't act separately."

Baghdad, while first in his sights, is not Perle's endgame. "No stages. This is total war. We are fighting a variety of enemies. There are lots of them out there," he says, ticking off Iran, Syria, and North Korea with all the gravity he would attach to a grocery list.

On this point, President Bush must understand: Richard Perle's war is not a limited operation. It marks the advent of empire, and once our republic crosses that threshold, we enter territory where the only guideposts are imperial failures gone before. The American public has no interest in administering colonies, and a president pledged to defend us will be hard pressed to explain how endless war in the Middle East will strengthen national security.

Perle has been curiously indulged by an administration with no tolerance for freelancers. But his antagonism of our allies, his reckless call for "total war," and his disdain for the diplomatic process make him a liability. Sen. Chuck Hagel, who seems to share our taste in office décor, recently quipped, "Maybe Mr. Perle would like to be in the first wave of those who go into Baghdad." Rather than requiring his conscription, President Bush should ask for Richard Perle's resignation—before his delusions drive us to a place we've never been and must not go. ■

The Great Equalizer

God may have created all men, but it was Sam Colt who made them equal. So it was said of the Old West, where Colt's six-shooter gave the small man a certain equality.

In the 21st century, the atom bomb is the great equalizer. No matter how evil the outlaw regime, acquisition of an atom bomb can earn it respect. When one has the bomb, attention must be paid.

Compare how America treats Kim Jong Il, the Stalinist who has starved millions, and Saddam, who has gassed thousands. Kim has a secret uranium enrichment program, a nuclear reactor, and a reprocessing plant to extract plutonium. He has kicked out his UN inspectors and threatened to turn South Korea into a sea of fire.

Saddam has no fissile material, no nuclear facilities, no atom bomb, and has invited UN inspectors to rummage about his country. Yet, as Maureen Dowd writes, Kim gets a fruit basket and Saddam a Tomahawk missile. Why? Kim may have the bomb, but Saddam does not. Get the bomb, and U.S. beligerence gives way to sweet reason.

In the 1950s "Red China" was isolated. In 1953, Eisenhower threatened to use atomic weapons on Chinese troops in Korea to force Peking to accept a truce. In 1958, Ike sent nuclear-capable mortars to Quemoy—and Chairman Mao decided he could live with Nationalist troops on the tiny island within sight of the Mainland.

But in 1964 China tested an atom bomb. In a decade, Mao had China's seat on the Security Council and the old anti-Communist Richard Nixon had come to pay the Great Helmsman his respects. China was soon getting World Bank

loans, was sponsored for the WTO, and has been granted \$100 billion trade surpluses by the United States.

One must commiserate with Fidel. He did not help kill 33,000 U.S. soldiers in Korea. While he has executed thousands of Cubans, unlike Mao and his henchmen, he has not annihilated millions. And though his human rights record is wretched, it is not in a league with China's. Yet, Fidel cannot get U.S. sanctions lifted while China exports a tenth of its gross national product to the USA. But if Fidel tested an atom bomb, Uncle Sam would suddenly have its own "sunshine policy"—with Cuba. History teaches that when a rogue regime gets an atom bomb, it gets respect.

Because Khrushchev had them and the means to deliver them, Eisenhower, who had threatened Beijing in 1953, did not even break relations with Moscow over its crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. And just as Dulles' bluster about "rollback" gave way to the Spirit of Camp David after Moscow called our bluff in Budapest, so too, Bush's bombast about "regime change" gives way to talk of food and fuel aid now that Kim Jong Il may have nuclear weapons.

The knowledge that an enemy can kill you induces a certain maturity of judgment and suspension of bellicosity. But the spread of atomic weapons also means an end of empires. Those 37,000 U.S. soldiers on the Korean DMZ look less like imperial troops today than hostages. Even the neocons are talking

about pulling out. In Asia, the sun is setting on an American empire begun in 1898. That is the meaning of Yongbyon.

John McCain wants confrontation and war if necessary with North Korea because he believes Kim's weapons constrict "our ability to shape the international order." McCain is right about the last point. And when Iran or an Arab regime tests an atom bomb, the neovision of Middle East empire vanishes. No wonder Sharon is calling for a U.S. attack on Tehran the day after we enter Baghdad. No wonder the War Party is calling for "Action This Day!"

The atom bomb was a truly awful and awesome invention. But America's monopoly on the weapon until 1949 saved Western Europe from Stalinism. And the possession of atomic weapons by both sides prevented a U.S.-Soviet war in the Caribbean and Europe in the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

Except for the border clash between China and Russia in 1969 and the 39 Scuds that landed on Israel in 1991, no nuclear power has ever been attacked or invaded. And all the members and candidate-members of the Axis of Evil know it. They have seen the disparate treatment Americans accord to nuclear and non-nuclear enemies.

As for President Bush's talk of preventive wars and preemptive strikes, it has probably been the greatest propellant to proliferation since Stalin got the news of Hiroshima.

"Whatever happens, we have got/The Maxim Gun, and they have not," wrote Belloc, after Kitchener's slaughter of the dervishes at Omdurman. Now the damn natives have got the Maxim Gun. What is a good imperialist to do—except go home? ■

[houses built upon sand]

Living in the Bubble

Government guarantees, global capital flows, and a consumption binge add up to a national mortgage crisis.

By Robertson Morrow

FROM THE SECURITY of their own homes, many sneer at the get-rich-quick crowd that lost money when the tech bubble burst. But many who would throw stones are living in glass houses—barely maintained by fragile second mortgages.

The brash sales pitches, reckless spending, and short-sighted decisions that fueled the dot coms' rise and fall have taken over the mortgage market. Everyone now knows about the tech bubble because it has already burst; fewer recognize its near neighbor, the mortgage bubble because they are living in it.

In the third quarter of last year, home mortgages increased at a record annual pace of \$724 billion—accounting for 70 percent of the entire increase in personal and corporate debt. Increased home mortgage borrowing has reached levels almost twice that of corporate borrowing during the bubble years.

Generations have bought homes by borrowing 80 percent and paying it down over 30 years. No longer. Now the American home is just one more credit line to be tapped. The problem is not that we have been assuming larger mortgages in order to live in larger houses

that we can afford because of larger incomes. The problem is that Americans have had roughly the same incomes and the same houses but have been mortgaging a larger percentage of those values.

As a percentage of personal income, mortgage debt has risen from 51 percent 25 years ago to over 100 percent today. In the last 5 years, mortgage debt has risen by 60 percent, or \$2.2 trillion, an amount roughly the same as the profits of every American corporation for the last five years and twice China's exports to the entire world.

One problem with borrowing all this money is that people might not be able to pay it back. Another is that, for the foreseeable future, Americans will be spending a large proportion of their income on debt service. This will constrain consumer spending—two-thirds of the economy—which will retard economic growth for the remainder of the decade. Slow economic growth will inhibit income growth, preventing us from earning our way out of the hole into which we have dug ourselves.

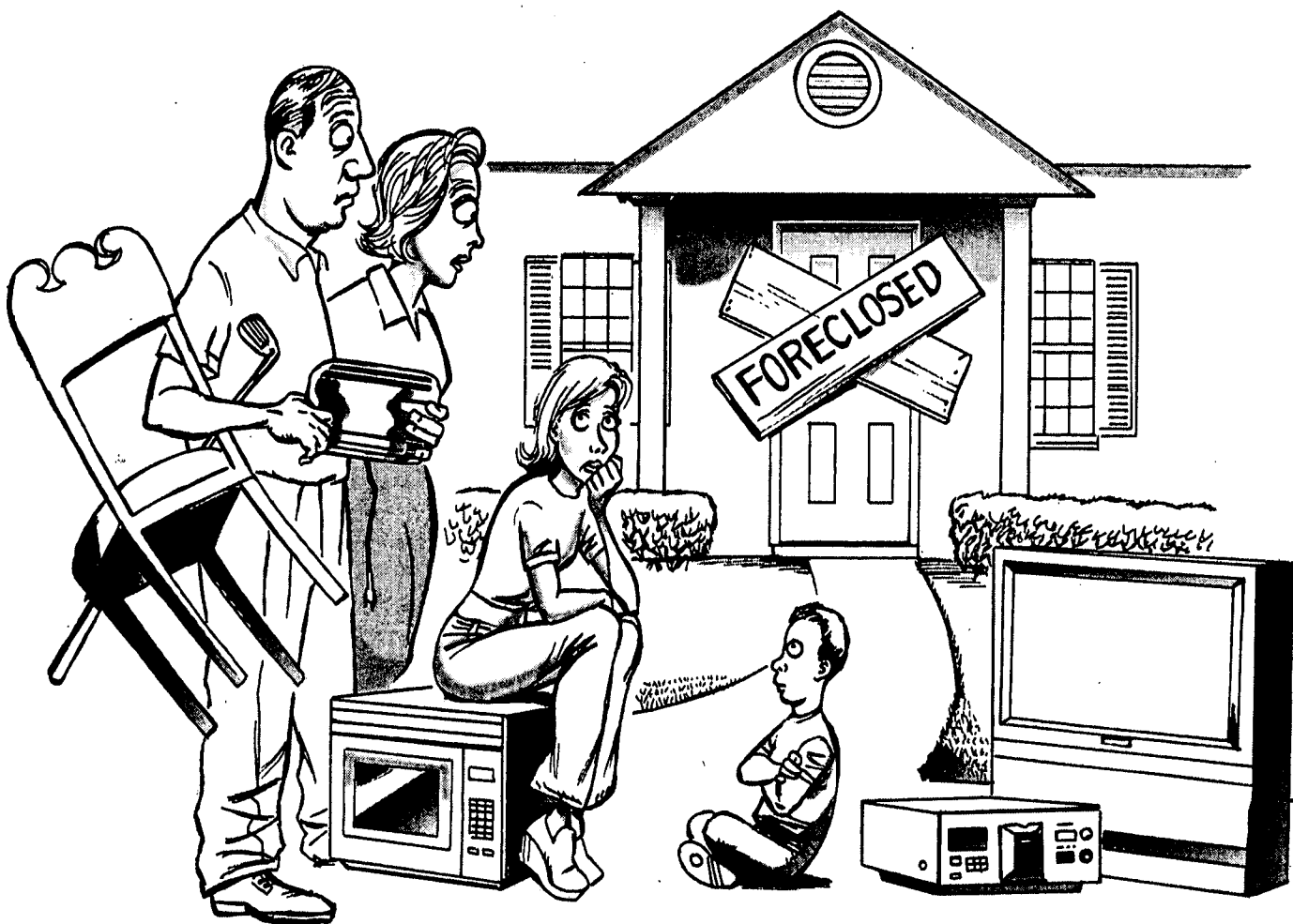
Moreover, at some point, we will exhaust the supply of money available using homes as collateral. In 2001 and

2002, Americans extracted \$300 billion in cash from their existing homes through refinancing and home equity loans. This infusion of cash is what has fueled rising consumer spending in the face of recession.

Why did a rational capitalist society choose to lend people too much money, and why did rational capitalist Americans choose to borrow more than was good for them?

Three reasons: The first is that the federal government dominates mortgage borrowing. The second is that modern finance has made it easier to succumb to the human temptation to borrow now and worry later. The third is that foreigners have—perhaps naïvely—been willing to lend Americans whatever we wanted. In short, American capitalism has been corrupted by government subsidies, value-free modern finance, and globalization.

The principal ways that government subsidizes mortgages are the Federal Housing Administration and the Government Sponsored Enterprises: Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac. These institutions raise money in the capital markets that is recycled into



KEVIN TUMA

home mortgages. They are subsidized because government guarantees their debts either explicitly or implicitly.

These federal guarantees encourage people to overextend by making borrowing cheaper than it otherwise would be. As always, when government subsidizes something, we get too much.

American capitalism historically contained constraints on the natural human propensity to borrow. But in the last twenty years, these limits have been systematically destroyed in the name of creating a more efficient financial system. We now have a system with greater technical efficiency but also one that gives borrowers far more rope with which to hang themselves—if they are inclined to try.

Witness the conversion of the humble home mortgage into an exotic and liquid financial instrument plugged into the

global money markets. Twenty-five years ago, most mortgages were issued by local banks from money raised through local deposits. Today, most mortgages are marketed by a variety of institutions from national banks like Citibank to mortgage-only companies like Ditech. But the money actually comes, via various intermediaries, from Wall Street and other money markets. Mortgages are bundled into financial instruments that are traded all over the world like stocks or bonds. This conversion has produced a financial system in which it is easier for available capital to flow to people who can pay the best price to use it. The downside is that it has removed the traditional restraints on the propensity to go into debt.

American capitalism was never structured to deliver absolute economic freedom. Rather, it was based on things like

the traditional wisdom that debt is a temptation—not something deserving of the neutral attitude implied by value-free modern finance. The American system once focused on the accumulation of wealth. It was a truism of traditional bourgeois culture that owning was better than owing, and all prosperous people believed this.

Today, the dynamic of value-free modern finance has twisted capitalism from the accumulation to the consumption of wealth. As Americans have increased their debt to finance the greatest consumer spending spree in the history of the world, we have become one of the most indebted people on the planet.

Near the center of this degeneration is the transformation of the home mortgage from a means of savings to a means of spending. The American mortgage enabled our parents to move from

property renters to homeowners. After thirty years, "burning the mortgage" was a rite of passage to true financial independence.

Today, extracting cash from homes has become a great hidden slush fund supporting current levels of consumer spending and, therefore, the American economy generally. Mortgage pushers offer cash-out refinancing and home equity loans. One new type of mortgage automatically increases the home equity credit line based on monthly mortgage repayments and quarterly increases in the appraised value of the house.

Several false justifications excuse this ominous increase in mortgage debt. First, since mortgage debt is tax-deductible, Americans are told they are simply being tax-efficient in taking on more mortgage debt to win a tax deduction in a world in which rising taxes make any tax deduction increasingly valuable. But this explanation is unpersuasive because non-deductible consumer debt is also increasing rapidly.

EXTRACTING CASH FROM HOMES HAS BECOME A GREAT HIDDEN SLUSH FUND, SUPPORTING CURRENT LEVELS OF CONSUMER SPENDING.

Second, because of immigration-driven competition, zoning restrictions, and Giuliani-style crime reductions in central cities, house prices have risen, and Americans are cashing out. But lending has risen faster than home prices. Ten years ago, the total of all mortgages (including small mortgages originated decades ago), was 35 percent of the value of mortgaged houses. In the third quarter of last year, it was 48 percent.

Independent of this increase in loan-to-value, there are conceptual reasons American should not ramp up their mortgages in response to inflation in the value of their homes.

Homeowners who respond to a rise in real estate prices by increasing their debt by the same amount tell themselves that if their house inflates by \$50,000 and they add \$50,000 to their mortgage, they are in the same financial position as before. This is false. If one assumes a \$50,000 debt at six percent, it is perfectly cancelled out if one simultaneously acquires a \$50,000 asset at six percent, for example, a risk-free \$50,000 bond. But \$50,000 of inflation in the price of your house is not a bond.

1. It does not generate cash flow. The debt you have acquired demands a six percent cash flow *from* you, so it can only be balanced by something that gives the same cash flow *to* you. A tasty chunk of house price inflation gives you no cash flow, however much gratification it may give you at cocktail parties.

2. It is not liquid. You have a debt payable only in actual money. Your house is not money but something that can be converted into money only with substantial time and effort. That is why

real estate is illiquid, unlike shares of IBM. Worse, you cannot sell only the inflation in your house's value or only part of the house.

3. The increase may not be \$50,000. When you actually do sell your house, the market may have dropped. Lots of Houstonians in 1983 thought that the recent rise in the value of their houses was locked in. By 1988, they knew better. (Average Houston house prices declined about 20 percent from 1983 to 1988.)

4. Transaction costs bleed you at every turn. Not only is it expensive to sell a house, but then you also have to find some place else to live.

As a result, inflation in the value of a house does not counterbalance an expanding mortgage the way many think it does. Even financial institutions, which should know better, have been promoting this illusion in order to make money.

This inflation in house prices also has a dark side that most people forget: when housing prices go up, your current house goes up in price, but your next house probably does too. So any financial gains you make must be balanced against an increase in your future costs. Of course, if you sell out of Silicon Valley and move to Utah, you can profit, but this requires reducing your consumption of three scarce commodities: location, location, location.

An indispensable aspect of the debt binge is the willingness of foreigners to lend us the money. Not only is 20 percent of mortgage debt sold to foreign banks and other foreign buyers outright, but modern finance has made all liquid instruments *de facto* fungible. Even when foreigners buy other American financial assets, they are propping up a market of which mortgages are a part. Take the foreign buyers out of the equation and the whole thing collapses, and plentiful, cheap mortgage debt is no longer available to Americans.

Without foreign buyers, the wave of cash-out refinancing and home equity loans would reverse, and we would return to the normal mode of gradually paying down mortgages.

The foreign-debt bubble, and therefore the mortgage bubble, is a necessary consequence of our trade deficits. When we run a trade deficit, foreigners are giving us their goods not in exchange for our goods but in exchange for something else of value. Subject to trivial quibbles, this can only be two things. The first is foreign investment: when we give them a factory in America or a claim on a factory in America. The second is debt.

The ratio between foreign investment and foreign debt is an empirical matter, with debt taking the majority today. But the fundamental principle that trade deficits must produce ownership or indebtedness is a matter of basic economic definitions. It does not depend, as some would have us believe, on differing economic theories. Bluntly put, there is no theoretical way to make the problem go away.

Thus one necessary consequence of the present trade mess is that America is inexorably becoming a nation of debtors and other nations—principally Japan and her Asian imitators—nations of creditors. What this really means is that an entire society (ours) has become biased in favor of consuming things, while others have become biased in favor of owning things.

Capitalism requires a balance between two contradictory impulses: to be rich, which means to own things, and to live well, which means to consume things. In a traditional national economy, it is impossible for an entire society to become warped towards debt-driven consumption for the simple reason that every debtor creates a creditor within the same society. For every person who prefers to live well by borrowing money and spending it, there must be someone who hoards resources so as to have that money on hand to lend him. It is possible for such a society to become viciously split between debtors and creditors—this was indeed a real issue in American politics in 1890 with the free silver controversy—but it is impossible for a self-contained society to lose the balance between debtors and creditors.

Globalization undoes this salutary restraint by making it possible for a preponderance of the creditors to be in one nation and a preponderance of the debtors in another. An entire nation can become a decadent playboy if another

nation is willing to become a miser. Obviously, this imbalance is not sustainable in the long run, but it can go on for years before the dénouement occurs. Given the ingrained cultural tendencies of different nations, it is no accident that America has slid into the role of profligate while nations like Japan play the lender.

**CAPITALISM REQUIRES A BALANCE BETWEEN TWO CONTRADICTIONARY IMPULSES:
TO BE RICH, WHICH MEANS TO OWN THINGS, AND TO LIVE WELL, WHICH MEANS
TO CONSUME THINGS.**

The mostly national character of our economy used to restrain the vice of debt; globalization gives it free rein. It is thus clear that the existence of real national economies, with real but quantitatively limited links to other economies, is a key principle in the maintenance of a healthy society. It is no accident that those nations that are the most globalized and know it, like Singapore, have ruthless government policies, like mandatory retirement savings, designed to mitigate this problem. Neither is it an accident that the economy of Europe was first integrated by Nazi architect Albert Speer. Because this is impossible in a free society like America, we must either go back to the national economy or give up our freedoms. This explains one of the notoriously shabby paradoxes of globalization: that it claims to expand freedom but is in fact always accompanied by a growth in regulation.

The global money market is a fickle lover. Once money stops blowing into a debt bubble, the bubble bursts, and no financial intervention can restore it. Just ask the Malaysians, the Russians, the Argentines, or the U.S. telecommunications industry.

What does this mean for the individual homeowner? The imprudent will suffer. Debt will become harder to assume, housing costs will fall, and consumer spending will sag. Those who refinanced to extract cash, took out a second mortgage, bought more house than they could afford, or failed to save, risk deep financial pain when the housing bubble

bursts. Homebuyers depend on their jobs to make their mortgage payments, and the economic contraction caused by a squeeze on consumer spending will put those jobs in jeopardy. Even the prudent will suffer due to the irresponsibility of others: one's financial mistakes are not solely one's own business.

Risk to the global financial system is even greater. For the first time in financial history, a major debtor nation owes its debt in its own currency. This means that rather than exporting goods to buy foreign currency to repay that debt, we can just print the money. We inflate the dollar to pay off foreigners in money that is not worth very much. Creditors will oppose destroying the dollar, but they lack the political clout of millions of American debtors. This opens the possibility of major inflation or polarization of the American political system between those serving the interests of foreign creditors and those representing American mortgage-holders. Neither is an attractive possibility, for either means the U.S. economy should be prepared to take a bubble bath. ■

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[reparations, please]

Dean of Catholic-Bashers

Daniel Goldhagen uses an unfounded charge against Pius XII to attack Christianity as a whole.

By Ronald J. Rychlak

IN 1999, JOHN CORNWELL fired the first round in a new assault on the papacy, the Catholic Church, and ultimately Christianity itself with his book, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*. Cornwell's thesis was that Pope Pius XII, who led the Catholic Church from 1939 until his death in 1958, was so concerned about centralizing authority in a strong papacy that he turned a blind eye to the growth of the Nazis. Most readers took this book strictly as an historical charge against a long-deceased Pope, but those who followed it all the way to the end saw that much of the author's hostility was actually directed at the current pontiff, Pope John Paul II.

Quickly following *Hitler's Pope* came a string of books (at least seven) that leveled new charges of anti-Semitism and blamed Christianity for the Holocaust. The culmination comes with a book by Daniel Goldhagen, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair*. In it, Goldhagen claims that the Catholic Church provided the Nazis with a "motive for murder" and should be held to a moral reckoning for its sinful behavior. He argues that the authors of the New Testament (he calls it "the Christian Bible") inserted anti-Semitic passages into the text decades after the crucifixion in order to

serve their own political needs. As such, Goldhagen's book is not simply an attack on the papacy or the Catholic Church, but on Christianity itself, especially the New Testament, which Goldhagen says is "fictitious" and "not a reliable rendition of facts and events, but legend."

Goldhagen's focus is on those passages of the New Testament that long have been recognized as containing language that *can* be misunderstood. Of particular concern is Matthew 27:24-25, where Christ is handed over to the Roman authorities, ultimately to face crucifixion. Pontius Pilate offered to free one of the "criminals," and the crowd called for Barabbas. As Matthew reports:

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."

And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!"

Goldhagen argues that Matthew here falsely attributes blame for the crucifixion to all Jews for all times, that this instilled a hatred of Jews into the European psyche, and that Hitler merely had

to exploit this pre-existing attitude to his own perverted ends.

The remedy that Goldhagen proposes includes having Christians agree that Christ is not the only way to salvation and having them (with help from non-Christians) rewrite the Gospels to purge offensive, anti-Semitic passages. He goes on to demand that the Catholic Church make reparations to Jews. He says that monetary reparations are deserved; political reparations are useful; but above all, he stresses the need for the Church to admit its moral failings. He asks for apologies, the construction of suitable monuments, an end to the Church's diplomatic relations with other nations, support for Israel, and repudiation of any claim that Christianity has supplanted Judaism. Instead, the Church must embrace religious pluralism, acknowledging that salvation is not limited to the Catholic Church or to Christianity. (Along the way, he also tells us that white southerners should make restitution to African-Americans for slavery and segregation.)

Let us first be clear that the Catholic Church does not read Matthew the way that Goldhagen suggests. At the Second Vatican Council, the Church made clear that guilt for Jesus' death is *not* attributable to all the Jews of that time or to any Jews of later times. The Catholic

Church has always understood that Jesus was born into a Jewish family. His mother was Jewish. His early followers were Jewish, and the people who first heard him preach were Jewish. As Pope Pius XI said in 1938:

Mark well that in the Catholic Mass, Abraham is our Patriarch and forefather. Anti-Semitism is incompatible with the lofty thought which that fact expresses. It is a movement with which we Christians can have nothing to do. No, no, I say to you it is impossible for a Christian to take part in anti-Semitism. It is inadmissible. Through Christ and in Christ we are the spiritual progeny of Abraham. Spiritually, we are all Semites.

Goldhagen actually tries to twist this proclamation to show that Pius XI was an anti-Semite, but he fails. In January 1939, the *National Jewish Monthly* reported, "the only bright spot in Italy has been the Vatican, where fine humanitarian statements by the Pope have been issuing regularly."

Certainly no one would suggest that Christians and Jews have got along well at all times throughout history. Prior to 1870, when popes had real temporal power, Jews were sometimes treated with religious and political contempt. Many Catholic officials of this period were fearful that Jews would lead Christians away from Christ, or worse. They found reason for their fear in Old Testament passages such as Joshua 6:21 (Jews "observed the ban by putting to the sword all living creatures in the city: men and women, young and old, as well as oxen, sheep and asses."), Deuteronomy 20:17 ("You [Jews] must doom them all ..."), and Deuteronomy 7:15:

When the LORD, your God, brings you [Jews] into the land which you

are to enter and occupy ... and you defeat them, you shall doom them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy Tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, chop down their sacred poles, and destroy their idols by fire. For you are a people sacred to the LORD, your God; he has chosen you from all the nations on the face of the earth to be a people peculiarly his own.

In 1564, Pope Pius IV announced that the Talmud could be distributed only on the condition that the portions offensive to Christians were erased. Earlier popes had, at times, banned it altogether.

These measures are not reflective of happy periods in the history of Christian-Jewish relations, but almost all papal critics acknowledge that throughout even the worst periods popes regularly condemned violence directed against Jews and offered protection when they could. This Catholic "anti-Judaism" was a matter of religion, not race. In fact, the more common charges arising out of this history related to efforts directed towards encouraging Jews to convert—to become Catholics.

By contrast, Nazi racial anti-Semitism did not encourage Jews to "join the party." This "scientific" position drew support from biological arguments and the absence of religion. Nazis showed films equating Jews, handicapped persons, and other "undesirables" with vermin that needed to be exterminated. This was in direct contradiction to everything that the Catholic Church had always taught about the fundamental dignity of all human life.

Does this mean that it was impossible for Hitler to lay claim to Christian teachings as he advanced his evil agenda? Of course not. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler went to great length about misusing religious imagery to inspire and inflame the mass-

es. Hitler also played to a populist mentality, a racist mentality, a socialist mentality, a chauvinistic mentality, a nurturing/mothering mentality, a scientific mentality, and just about any other mentality that he could think of. Are they all to be condemned because they were capable of being manipulated by Hitler (who also planned to eliminate largely Catholic Poland)? The answer is equally clear: of course not.

In order to understand the dynamics of the time, one need only examine Nazi arguments from the 1930s and '40s. Hitler regularly complained about Christian interference with his plan (saying one time that the Pope was blackmailing him). Nazi propaganda often showed Jews invoking Christian imagery or hiding behind church symbols for protection. Several such drawings are reproduced in Konrad Löw's new book, *Die Schuld: Christen und Juden im Urteil der Nationalsozialisten und der Gegenwart*, which was just published in Germany.

Goldhagen's book is not based on original historical research. He just culled the worst accusations from authors like Garry Wills, Susan Zuccotti, John Cornwell, and others without giving any consideration to the serious flaws that have been noted in their books. Goldhagen takes many of his larger themes from *Constantine's Sword* by James Carroll, an ex-priest, whom Goldhagen calls "a devout Catholic." Carroll hardly sounded that way in his memoirs, when he scoffed at his excommunication from the Catholic Church. More troubling, however, is the way Goldhagen selectively used secondary sources to manufacture arguments.

Goldhagen's main source for his charges about the Vatican allegedly helping Nazi war criminals escape justice is Michael Phayer's book, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965*. Phayer, in turn, draws main-

ly from the conspiracy-monger John Loftus and his discredited book, *Unholy Trinity: The Vatican, the Nazis and the Swiss Banks*. More recently, Loftus has accused the Bush family of establishing a fortune by laundering money derived from the Nazis.

Similarly, Goldhagen relies heavily and uncritically on Susan Zuccotti's book, *Under His Very Windows*, for his analysis of that period of the war when the Germans occupied Rome and northern Italy (1943-44). One of Zuccotti's chief sources, in turn, is the notorious Robert Katz—who was successfully sued by relatives of Pope Pius XII and publicly condemned by Italy's highest court for defaming the wartime Pope.

Goldhagen blindly accepts John Cornwell's mistranslation of a letter written in 1919 by Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, when he was papal nuncio in Munich. That year, Bolshevik revolutionaries temporarily took power in Bavaria and began operating what might best be described as a rogue government. Pacelli sent his assistant, Monsignor Lorenzo Schioppa, to meet with the Bolshevik leader, Eugen Levine, to determine whether representatives in Munich would be accorded diplomatic status. Levine responded by saying that he would recognize the extra-territoriality of the foreign legations "if, and as long as the representatives of these Powers ... do nothing against the [Bolshevik government]." He made it clear that he "had no need" of Vatican representatives.

Pacelli wrote a six-page letter back to Rome reporting on this meeting. The key passage, as translated by Cornwell (and accepted uncritically by Goldhagen), described the scene at the palace as follows:

... in the midst of all this, a gang of young women, of dubious appearance, Jews like all the rest of

them, hanging around in all the offices with lecherous demeanor and suggestive smiles. The boss of this female rabble was Levien's [sic] mistress, a young Russian woman, a Jew and a divorcée, who was in charge. And it was to her that the nunciature was obliged to pay homage in order to proceed.

This Levien [sic] is a young man, of about thirty or thirty-five, also Russian and a Jew. Pale, dirty, with drugged eyes, hoarse voice, vulgar, repulsive, with a face that is both intelligent and sly.

Goldhagen suggests that these 106 words, based on Schioppa's report, prove that Pacelli was an anti-Semite. In truth, however, this translation is grossly distorted.

The phrase "Jews like all the rest of them" is a distorted, inaccurate translation of the Italian phrase *i primi*. The literal translation would be "the first ones" or "the ones just mentioned." Similarly, the Italian word *schiera* should be translated as "group" instead of "gang." Additionally, the Italian *gruppo femminile* should be translated as "female group," not "female rabble." The Italian *occhi scialbi* should be translated as "pale eyes" not "drugged eyes."

When the entire letter is read with an accurate translation, it loses its anti-Semitic tone, which was introduced only by the bogus translation upon which Goldhagen relied. Moreover, that is not the only translation problem with *A Moral Reckoning*. Jody Bottum, writing in the *Weekly Standard*, says, "[T]here isn't a Latin phrase in the book that doesn't have an odd translation."

When Goldhagen is unable to find outrageous charges that others have already advanced, he seems willing to manufacture false evidence to support his case. For instance, the photograph on the cover of *A Moral Reckoning*

shows a Nazi sign ("Jews not welcome here") near what Goldhagen calls a "Catholic shrine." Supposedly this implies some kinship between the Church and the Nazis. According to German reviewers, however, this is not a single photo but a collage that brings the two images together.

A German court even ordered Goldhagen's book to be pulled from the shelves due to a caption beneath a photo showing a Catholic prelate surrounded by Nazis. The caption said, "Cardinal Michael Faulhaber marches between rows of SA men at a Nazi rally in Munich." In fact, the photo shows papal nuncio Cesare Orsenigo, not Bavarian bishop Faulhaber. The city is Berlin not Munich, and it is not a Nazi rally but a May Day parade. Faulhaber was a staunch foe of the Nazis, and his diocese reports that he never attended a Nazi rally. Orsenigo was nuncio and *ex-officio* dean of the diplomatic corps, so he was expected to attend this parade, which celebrated workers, not Nazis.

Another of Goldhagen's most blatant errors relates to the Franciscan friar Miroslav Filipovic-Majstorovic, also known as "Brother Satan." Goldhagen ends his discussion of Croatia by writing, "Forty thousand ... perished under the unusually cruel reign of 'Brother Satan.' ... Pius XII neither reproached nor punished him. ... during or after the war." Actually, "Brother Satan" was tried, defrocked, and expelled from the Franciscan order before the war ended. In fact, his expulsion occurred in April 1943, before he ran the extermination camp. For Pius XII to have punished him "after the war" would have been difficult indeed, as he was executed by the Communists in 1945.

Goldhagen argues that the Vatican "endorsed" Italy's anti-Semitic laws. Actually, Mussolini's "Aryan Manifesto" was issued on July 14, 1938. On July 28, 1938, Pius XI made a public speech in

which he said, "The entire human race is but a single and universal race of men. There is no room for special races. We may therefore ask ourselves why Italy should have felt a disgraceful need to imitate Germany." This was reprinted in full on the front page of the Vatican newspaper on July 30, under a four-column headline. Other articles condemning anti-Semitism (and I may have missed some) appeared on July 17, July 21, July 23, July 30, Aug. 13, Aug. 22-23, Oct. 11-18, Oct. 20, Oct. 23, Oct. 24, Oct. 26, Oct. 27, Nov. 3, Nov. 14-15, Nov. 16, Nov. 17, Nov. 19, Nov. 20, Nov. 21, Nov. 23, Nov. 24, Nov. 26, Dec. 25, and Jan. 19, 1939.

One of the most amazing parts of *A Moral Reckoning* is where Goldhagen attempts to construe the U.S. Bishops' 1942 statement as a slap at Pius XII. At their annual meeting in November 1942, the U.S. Bishops released a statement on the plight of the Jews in Europe. It says, in part:

We feel a deep sense of revulsion against the cruel indignities heaped upon Jews in conquered countries and upon defenseless peoples not of our faith. ... Deeply moved by the arrest and maltreatment of the Jews, we cannot stifle the cry of conscience. In the name of humanity and Christian principles, our voice is raised.

Goldhagen tries to turn this statement into a slap at the Pope and an "all but explicit rebuke of the Vatican." Actually, the American bishops repeatedly invoked Pius XII's name and teachings with favor ("We recall the words of Pope Pius XII"; "We urge the serious study of peace plans of Pope Pius XII"; "In response to the many appeals of our Holy Father"). Moreover, in a letter written at this very time, Pius expressed thanks for the "constant and under-

standing *collaboration*" of the American bishops and archbishops. They replied with a letter pledging "anew to the Holy Father our best efforts in the fulfillment of his mission of apostolic charity to war victims." They also offered a prayer for the Pope's charitable collaborators. The very idea that the bishops were trying to insult the Holy Father is preposterous.

WHEN GOLDHAGEN IS UNABLE TO FIND OUTRAGEOUS CHARGES THAT OTHERS HAVE ALREADY ADVANCED, HE SEEMS WILLING TO MANUFACTURE FALSE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT HIS CASE.

Actually, the Catholic Church itself is a particularly unwise target for Goldhagen to have chosen. It is easy enough to find sloppy interpretations of the Bible or hate-mongers bending it for their own purposes, but the Catholic Church has a hierarchy and official teachings on these matters. Goldhagen avoids that reality. In fact, he provides no evidence for his principal assertion that the guilt of all Jews for the crucifixion was a "central Catholic doctrine" and teaching it was "official Catholic Church doctrine." In point of fact, the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, the authoritative statement of Catholic doctrine during the Nazi period, says something quite different: "All sinners were the authors of Christ's Passion."

Goldhagen likewise presents no evidence that Germans who were brought up with a traditional Catholic education were more likely to support or join the Nazi Party than were other Germans. In fact, Hitler tended to fare worse at the polls in Catholic areas than he did in non-Catholic parts of Germany. None of the Nazi leaders left evidence suggesting that they participated in the killing because they thought of their victims as deserving death due to the Gospels. Perhaps most shamefully, Goldhagen dis-

parages all the good that Pope John Paul has done to advance relations between Catholics and Jews over the past quarter century.

Clarifying the events surrounding the crucifixion and working toward a better understanding of the truth are legitimate pursuits for Bible scholars. In fact, there is a vast body of writing

that analyzes these issues in detail. Unfortunately, Goldhagen appears to be unfamiliar with most of it. He says that Catholic teaching has always "revised" its essential beliefs. That is certainly not true, and it reflects a fundamental ignorance of the topic on which he purports to write. The documents of Vatican II maintain a clear and unqualified connection with the original Deposit of Faith. The Catholic Church, according to its own teaching, does not have the authority to rewrite scripture or deny the ultimate divinity of Christ. (Imagine the divisions that would take place within Christianity if it tried to do so.)

Those who are interested in learning more about Catholic teaching regarding relations with Jews (which should include every reviewer who treated Goldhagen's book with any degree of respect) are advised to read *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council's renewal of the Church's condemnation of anti-Semitism. ■

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[peace is patriotic]

The Antiwar Movement Takes Shape

While the marchers have gone mainstream, many difficult choices lie ahead.

by Justin Raimondo

EDWARD HAMM IS PEEVED. He not only voted for George W. Bush, he gave half a million dollars to the Republican campaign—and now he wants a refund. On Jan. 13, Hamm and a group of Republican businessmen placed a full-page ad in the *Wall Street Journal*. Headlined “A Republican Dissent on Iraq,” it gave voice to their complaint: “The candidate we supported in 2000 promised a more humble nation in our dealings with the world. We gave him our votes and our campaign contributions. That candidate was you. We feel betrayed. We want our money back. We want our country back.”

A week later, 100,000 turned out in San Francisco and nearly as many in Washington, D.C., to protest the war. A neoconservative smear campaign was launched that tried to label the protesters radical leftists, but these were not just the usual suspects. The throngs who waved handmade signs and marched through the streets of cities all across America were mostly made up of ordinary, middle-class Americans who oppose taking this giant step on the road to empire. I was proud to march in San Francisco alongside Veterans for Peace,

who stood out even in a crowd of 100,000-plus, their banner emblazoned with this trenchant slogan: “Preemptive War is Un-American.”

Participants for the most part rejected the printed placards handed out by “International ANSWER” (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism), the official sponsor of the Washington and San Francisco events and handcrafted their own. The most popular slogan, based on my observations at the Bay Area event, was “Peace is patriotic.” Michelle Goldberg, writing in Salon.com, noted American flags in abundance and saw the same gentrification process well underway: “The broad-based antiwar movement many have awaited is here.”

Just how broad remains to be seen. Medea Benjamin, one of the movement's honchos, denied to Pat Buchanan on MSNBC's “Buchanan and Press” that antiwar groups are dominated by extreme leftists. Reminding him that “We've got you with us on this one,” she offered to accompany him personally to the next big rally, slated for Feb. 15. While I doubt that this means Pat—or anyone with views approximating his—will have a place on the speakers' plat-

form—such a welcome development is no longer unthinkable.

The antiwar movement has gotten bad press in the past because it has indeed been organizationally dominated by outright Communists. The ANSWER group has had to answer charges that it is basically a front for an obscure Marxist sect with the improbable name of Workers World Party. Our war birds have gleefully jumped on this affiliation, happy to divert attention away from the looming conflict by making the antiwar movement the issue. Now a new group, United for Peace, has stepped forward, merging the anti-globalization Left with the moderate peace groups such as Peace Action and the faith-based opposition centered around the National Council of Churches and Catholic groups such as Pax Christi.

The transformation of the American antiwar movement from the exclusive preserve of leftists to the domain of soccer moms and Republican businessmen, while far from complete, is well underway. But this metamorphosis needs to go much further, and happen much more quickly, if the movement is to make a breakthrough. Opposition to

war in Iraq is so much broader than the narrow spectrum between the "green" Hollywood Left and the reds of the Far Left. Today, the movement still barely has room for Ed Hamm, yet the guy pulled \$170,000 out of his pocket and used it to make one of the most radical condemnations of the drive to war to be heard anywhere, if by "radical" we mean fundamental and not merely frenzied.

"How many young American lives will be lost in this dubious war?" Hamm and his co-signatories asked in their open letter to the president. "How many more innocent Iraqis will be killed and maimed and made homeless? Haven't they suffered enough, after two decades of terrible wars and sanctions? Among the one billion Muslims in the world there is now a steady trickle of recruits going to Al Qaeda. You will turn the trickle into a torrent. A billion bitter enemies will rise out of this war."

How many Ed Hamms out there are asking the same questions? To reach them, the antiwar movement has got to ditch its ideological baggage, epitomized by Mumia Abu Jamal, the convicted cop-killer whose cause never goes unmentioned at an antiwar event, including the recent rallies. On "Buchanan & Press," Ms. Benjamin confidently assured her somewhat skeptical host that "we're going to stop this war before it starts." If that seemed impossible only a few weeks ago, it now appears only highly unlikely. Antiwar sentiment is surging, but the president may launch an attack before the movement gains critical mass. If he does not, it will not be because of the organized antiwar effort but due to the efforts of Colin Powell and the self-imposed constraints of the UN inspections process. This is the one opening that could fuel the antiwar movement and give it the broad character it needs to spike the neoconservative project of an all-out global war against the Muslim world.

Norman Podhoretz calls it World War IV—the Cold War being the third—and this horrifying prospect the neocons openly celebrate. The task of the Bush administration, declared Podhoretz in *Commentary* magazine, is "to fight World War IV—the war against militant Islam." This means targeting not only the "axis of evil," but also Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority.

The conservative columnist Paul Craig Roberts wrote a scathing indictment of Podhoretz's war cry: "Americans are indebted to Podhoretz for making it clear that a U.S. invasion of Iraq is the beginning of World War IV. President Bush and his strategic thinkers should ponder this carefully and be upfront with the American people," he wrote, and his piece asked many of the same questions raised by Hamm's ad, but instead addressed their

mushroom cloud. The 2003 re-run follows the same storyline, albeit with a different backdrop: a similarly angelic girl child stands enraptured by the daisy game, as oil wells burn, belligerent crowds swell the streets of foreign cities, and an ambulance speeds to an emergency somewhere in America. The screen goes black, and a mushroom crowd blossoms out of its depths.

Voiceover: "War with Iraq. Maybe it will end quickly. Maybe not. Maybe it will spread. Maybe extremists will take over countries with nuclear weapons. Maybe the unthinkable." The countdown commences, but only gets to eight before the voice breaks in:

"Maybe that's why the overwhelming majority of Americans say to President Bush: let the inspections work."

Among the antiwar left-liberals, the UN has the status of a sacred totem: it is the *deus ex machina* of their little

THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT HAS GOT TO DITCH ITS IDEOLOGICAL BAGGAGE, EPITOMIZED BY MUMIA ABU JAMAL, THE CONVICTED COP-KILLER WHOSE CAUSE NEVER GOES UNMENTIONED AT AN ANTIWAR EVENT

broader implications. "How many sons, husbands, fathers, brothers, grandsons, uncles, cousins and friends are Americans willing to give to a war, the object of which is the social and political reconstruction of the Middle East?"

By explicitly raising the imagery of a new world war in a series of television ads, modeled on Lyndon Baines Johnson's infamous "Daisy" ads, a grassroots antiwar group has at least addressed this question, but in terms that are far from encouraging. The original 1964 version showed a 6-year-old sprite with the face of an angel pulling the petals off a daisy, while the soundtrack blared the countdown. At the final count the screen was filled with the image of a

morality play, always an unconvincing plot device that may necessitate a surprise ending. The inspections procedure itself could become a flashpoint for war: a Gulf of Tonkin-like incident would be easy enough to engineer under the present circumstances.

The liberal multilateralism that energizes the "give inspections a chance" crowd is just as aggressive—and potentially dangerous—as the unilateralists. The perspective of the newest antiwar coalition, "Win Without War," is that Hans Blix has every right to go traipsing through Iraq as if he owned the place. Backed by Hollywood money, WWW is not opposed to military intervention in principle. "There might be circum-

stances where some of our groups would support [military action against Iraq]," says David Cortright, formerly the executive director of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, and a key leader of the new group, "such as if there were explicit authorization from the UN Security Council." Producer/director Robert Greenwald notes that the group's initial statement "leaves open the possibility of a multilateral attack. We felt it was premature to get into that."

As the inspectors feel the heat from Washington, and the inspections process grows ever more intrusive, it may be too late to "get into that" before long. At best, the multilateralists can only delay the war by a few months. But in the end their own rhetoric will return to haunt them. The irony of the "daisy" ads in 1964 was that Johnson, not Goldwater, wound up leading us into war, with help from antiwar liberals. It will no doubt give the Marxists of ANSWER cold comfort to realize that history is indeed repeating itself, as Marx predicted: the first time as tragedy, the second as tragedy compounded by an unmistakable element of farce.

Polls indicate that support for the president's war policy is slipping. According to the Pew Research Center for the People, 76 percent will support a war against Iraq if the "smoking gun" is ever found. While the Bushies insist it is up to the Iraqis to prove they do not have weapons of mass destruction, only 26 percent fail to perceive the logical impossibility of proving a negative. The Pew poll also reveals that 53 percent believe the president has yet to make a credible case for war, while 42 percent say he has. This reverses the Bushian advantage of September, when 52 percent were convinced by the president's arguments and only 37 percent were avowed skeptics. If a delay is the best proponents of peace can hope for, then they had better pray it is enough time to

build momentum — and come up with some better arguments.

The idea that the antiwar movement needs to be "mainstreamed" out of having any principled message will be its undoing. A regional conflagration will be no less disastrous if delayed. Having got rid of the Workers World Party, the movement will merely have exchanged one problem for another, far more insurmountable one: how to avoid canceling itself out.

THE IRONY OF THE "DAISY" ADS IN 1964 WAS THAT JOHNSON, NOT GOLDWATER, WOUND UP LEADING US INTO WAR, WITH HELP FROM ANTIWAR LIBERALS.

The idea that the "soft" Wilsonians, with their cult of the UN and their devotion to "humanitarian" wars of "liberation," as in Kosovo, can lead an effective opposition to the neocons' war drive is wishful thinking, at best. At worst, the very same people who are now saying "give peace a chance" could turn on a dime and declare: "Well, we gave peace a chance, and it didn't work." Then they will turn the job over to the self-described "hard" Wilsonians, such as *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer Max Boot, and both wings of the War Party will unite in a common cause.

In order to convince Americans that a war of conquest in Iraq is an uncommonly bad idea, the Left need not remove its backbone. It only needs to remove its ideological blinders long enough to see that building a mass movement against the war is not like building a political party. A multi-issue platform can only limit the movement's mass potential and prevent it from focusing on the overriding issue of war and peace.

Among the complaints of the so-called moderates is that the Left insists on "bashing" Israel. As Dana Hull writes in

the Knight-Ridder newspapers, "One of the biggest divides is the Israel-Palestinian conflict. While more moderate antiwar groups like the 'Win Without War' coalition have pointedly skirted the contentious issue so as not to alienate mainstream Americans," the ANSWER coalition has embraced the Palestinians. But there can be no discussion of the war, and its causes, without a frank discussion of Israel's key role as fomentor. This is a matter of simple geography and

Saddam's military limitations. Iraqi Scuds will not reach Peoria, but Tel Aviv may take a few hits before it's over. Iraq's central position as Israel's major enemy in the region, and the larger vision of World War IV, point to the undeniable reality of the coming war: in effect the war will be fought by the U.S. on behalf of Israel. Is this a goal that the "mainstream" is likely to embrace?

Another point of tension in the movement is the question of sanctions. Todd Gitlin, writing in *Mother Jones* magazine, bemoaned the antiwar coalition's hostility to sanctions, which have killed many thousands over the years and stunted an entire generation of Iraqis. But this is a fundamental moral point that cannot be compromised by any antiwar movement worthy of the name: if an anti-sanctions stance banishes opponents of U.S. policy to the fringe, then they are in good company with the Pope and the National Council of Catholic Bishops.

Taking these positions contributes to the single-issue clarity in the antiwar movement because these are part of the great question now being debated: what

kind of foreign policy is proper for a free and prosperous America? Is it one driven by an unrestrained messianism, the worship of global "democracy," the imposition of Western values at gunpoint throughout the world? Or is it based on the traditional wisdom of the Founding Fathers, who counseled us against "entangling alliances" and warned that hubris, and the quest for empire, would be the downfall of our old republic?

As now constituted, the antiwar movement is not prepared to win this debate. The only component that can deal with the question of imperialism is hopelessly saddled with all sorts of rather unattractive baggage, and is so self-infatuated that it can barely look further right than the Rev. Al Sharpton.

A few principled leftists realize that they need to broaden the appeal of the movement to oppose the war and that the only reliable allies they can hope for come from the anti-interventionist Right: "If the left can ever reach out to this [populist, antiwar] right," writes *Nation* columnist Alexander Cockburn, "which it's almost constitutionally incapable of doing, we'll have something." The lessening of ANSWER's influence, however, will not necessarily lead to this kind of *glasnost*. An alliance of Pat Buchanan with the Hollywood Left seems even more improbable.

Yet a Left-Right alliance of viscerally antiwar liberals and nationalist "America First" conservatives will naturally evolve over time as the horrible consequences of this war come home to roost: they will find themselves moving ineluctably toward one another, in program if not in spirit. The only problem is that, by that time, it will be too late.

Justin Raimondo is editorial director of Antiwar.com and author of An Enemy of the State: The Life of Murray N. Rothbard.

CAIR Package

A Muslim civil rights group tests the limits of American pluralism.

By Jeremy Lott

IF AN EDITORIAL CARTOONIST'S job is to provoke, then Doug Marlette hit the jackpot with an illustration entitled "What would Muhammad drive?" Taking its cue from the popular "What would Jesus drive?" campaign—a question proposed by Protestant environmentalists to shame commuters out of driving SUVs—the cartoon featured the founder of Islam behind the wheel of a Ryder rental truck *à la* Tim McVeigh) that carried a nuclear bomb. Marlette justified this cartoon to WorldNetDaily.com by explaining, "The truth, like it or not, is that Muslim fundamentalists have committed devastating acts of terrorism against our country in the name of their prophet."

The drawing was submitted to the *Tallahassee Democrat*, which declined to run it in the print edition. But the cartoon of a bomb-toting Muhammad was accidentally posted online and quickly made the rounds via e-mail, which provoked a strong reaction from Muslims.

Marlette received over 4,500 angry e-mails and a torrential downpour of phone calls, including some that he characterized as death threats. Columnist Kathleen Parker complained that Marlette was "on the receiving end of an Islamist *fatwa*," which was organized by the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR—pronounced "care").

Founded in 1994 by Omar Ahmad and convert Ibrahim Hooper as a civil rights group to "promote a positive image of

Islam and Muslims in America," the Washington D.C.-based CAIR went relatively unnoticed until four hijacked planes slammed into the World Trade Center and Pentagon and plowed into a Pennsylvania field. (A search of U.S. newspapers for the year previous to the attacks yields 607 mentions. In the month after the attacks, CAIR received notice 417 times)

Since Sept. 11, 2001, CAIR has been the most effective voice for the interests of American Muslims, whether they want to be spoken for or not. President Bush early on met publicly with CAIR members as part of his campaign to declare Islam a "religion of peace." CAIR has got this attention not by holding symposia or calling for papers but by raising a ruckus about a thousand slights, real or perceived, against Islam in general and American Muslims in particular. The operation involves mass media appearances and grassroots activism, but by far the most effective is the so-called CAIR Package.

Every day—sometimes several times a day—CAIR sends out updates to several hundred thousand readers who have signed up to receive them at the CAIR website (www.cair-net.org). As the website coyly explains, "We believe local response is a key factor in making our voices heard." The subject matter ranges from cloning to anti-Islamic gaffes by journalists, politicians, or other public figures. The items include con-

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tact info as well as a suggested, peaceful course of action. Often, the recommendation is as simple as asking members to protest against criticism of Muslims or Islam, which tends to produce instant migraines for reporters, columnists, or newspaper ombudsmen.

Many members of the press, understandably, do not look kindly on the thousands of e-mails that a CAIR alert can generate. WorldNetDaily founder Joseph Farah complains, "Our coverage of the group has ... sparked thousands of protest e-mails from its followers—not only in the United States but the entire Muslim world." Echoing a criticism that has found a home in outlets from the *New Republic* to the *Weekly Standard* to *Salon*, Farah calls CAIR "an extremist organization posing as a reasonable, moderate group." A lefty editor who requested not to be named called the group "dishonest, and sometimes rather extremist." CAIR has been accused of sloppiness, of refusing to denounce violence, and of having ties to some shady characters. Its detractors paint a picture of an Islamofascist cabal masquerading as a civil rights group.

Some of the criticism directed at CAIR is to the point, but much of it is fraught with mistakes and hyperbole. To wit, last March 17, *National Review's* Rod Dreher posted an item on his magazine's online forum ("The Corner") pointing to a recent grenade attack on a Protestant church in Pakistan, which killed five and injured 45 others. Dreher wrote, "We await CAIR's e-mail campaign denouncing this violence." But several hours previous to Dreher's post, a message had already been sent to the CAIR e-mail list that quoted CAIR chairman Omar Ahmad as saying, "We condemn this attack in the strongest terms possible and call for the apprehension of the perpetrators. It is not only an act of terrorism against innocent civilians,

but is also an assault on the sanctity of a house of worship. No political or religious cause could justify such horrifying violence." It is hard to see how CAIR's condemnation could have got any stronger than the "strongest terms possible," but a correction was never posted by Dreher.

On the subject of CAIR packages, I speak from experience. I was on the receiving end of one last March over an article for the website of the *American Prospect* that drew attention to comments by editor Rich Lowry in *National Review's* online forum. Lowry had asked readers what should be done in the event of a nuclear attack on U.S. soil. In response to the crazy responses he received, he toyed with the idea that the U.S. should announce that it would nuke Mecca—though he included enough weasel words to avoid endorsing the massacre outright.

What was meant to be a humorous rebuttal (favorite line: "Lowry makes Coulter sound like a girl") turned into a mini scandal when CAIR grabbed my piece, along with the original posts, and broadcast them to its members. Over a two week period, I received copies of more than 1,500 protest e-mails that were sent to *National Review*. The gaffe was noted in several places, including the *Washington Post*. Peggy Noonan wrote in her *Wall Street Journal* column that "we should probably not be having chatty conversations about whether or not it would be a good idea to take out Mecca."

In response, *National Review* began posting the more extreme letters, and Lowry sent out a mass e-mail in which he emphatically explained, "I do not favor bombing Mecca." "Islam's holiest site," he wrote "... would never be a valid target." The letter blamed a sinister-sounding "group called CAIR" for "grossly distort[ing]" what he had written through selective quotation.

But while the event served to validate many conservatives' already rather low view of the Muslim advocacy group, the event had the opposite effect on this writer. Though my politics were and remain very different from CAIR's, I came away from the nuking-Mecca incident with a much more positive impression of both the organization and its constituents.

To begin, CAIR did not rush to send out the alert to its readers. The link in my article to the relevant posts on "The Corner" was broken, and it was only through CAIR's queries that I knew to have it fixed. When the alert finally did go out, CAIR cautioned readers to be restrained and polite in their responses to Lowry and company.

It was obvious that to at least half of the writers, English was a second language, but most were articulate enough to register their opposition. They were also startlingly polite, considering the subject matter. The average letter explained why even hinting at nuking Mecca was a call for violence against Islam and a *de facto* call for violence against Muslims. From there, the letter would a) demand to know what such bile was doing in a "respectable publication"; b) call for a public apology and some kind of censure for Lowry; and then c) and, this is the one that got me, the letter writer would typically thank the *National Review* crew for taking the time to consider the complaint. One admirably frank letter explained, "Mecca matters more to us than our own lives." Other replies were almost touching in their simplicity and grace. My favorite was only four lines long, including the salutation: "Dear Sir, I am so disappointed by these comment made. Do they really show how you feel about Islam and Muslims? God bless you with more wisdom. Thank you."

One should avoid painting too rosy a picture of CAIR and its supporters. A very small subset of the letters copied to

me nearly resembled death threats, and one imagines that the really nasty letters are routinely excluded from carbon copy lists. Also, though CAIR dealt from the top of the deck in this instance, it is not always so scrupulous. Last year, it popularized bogus polling data on a major rise in violence against Muslims in America. In fact, the press would do well to treat CAIR's internal polling with a severe and salty skepticism.

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That said, the tactics of CAIR do not differ in any meaningful way from those of the anti-discrimination industry in general, which *Reason* magazine's Tim Cavanaugh recently labeled, "the Hobbesian nightmare in a nonprofit setting." The tactics that have drawn so much criticism when employed by CAIR—frequent alerts to elicit comments and money from supporters; demonizing opponents; slipshod use of polling; a desire to elevate small tiffs into national outrages—were first field-tested by the grievance industry as a whole. When the Anti-Defamation League or the Catholic League engage in the same sorts of tactics, commentators respond with aggressive eye-rolling or charges of irresponsibility. When CAIR uses them, it is said to be notorious, extremist, even anti-American.

One does not need a sensitive olfactory sense to catch a whiff of the double standard here. The thing that seems so objectionable about CAIR is that, well, it's Muslim. And the mode of Islam that it represents is not necessarily the so-called moderate variety. As such, CAIR advocates policies that irk American conservatives and liberals alike.

On domestic affairs, it angers the Right by speaking out against religious and racial profiling, as well as the use of secret evidence in immigration hearings. December crackdowns on Muslim immigrants did not result in mass deportations largely due to the efforts of CAIR and other groups to publicize their supposed mistreatment. Liberals dislike the group for its traditional Muslim social conservatism—a recent action alert

dubbed cloning as anti-Islam and asked readers to encourage a national ban. On the foreign front, CAIR is decidedly pro-Palestinian, which annoys hawks in both camps.

If CAIR had not been around at the outset of the War on Terrorism, then some mischievous Greek deity would have been sorely tempted to invent such a group. Its existence calls into question all kinds of cherished American notions about freedom of religion and pluralism.

Freedom of religion may be extensive in the U.S., but it is far from blind and applies unevenly to different groups. Old Catholic and Protestant denominations can proceed relatively untrammelled—unless, say, they decide to cover up for child molesters—but more recently imported faiths fight against both laws and sometimes stifling social norms in order to gain acceptance for their particular beliefs and practices.

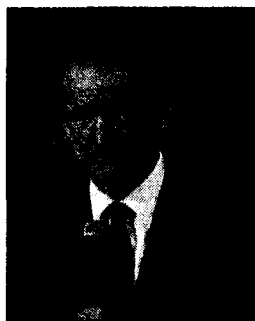
Take the case of Sultaana Freeman, a convert to Islam who filed suit in court last June because the state of Florida denied her a driver's license. The cause of the rejection was not unpaid parking tickets or moving violations, but Mrs. Freeman's attire. Specifically, she wears

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a *niqab* from head to toe and refused to remove the veil for the purpose of taking her picture to place on the license. She had been allowed to pose fully garbed for two previous licenses, but post-Sept. 11 it was no veil or no license.

New York Press columnist Christopher Caldwell was duly incredulous about Freeman's claims. Such a license, he wrote, "is a permit to operate a piece of machinery dangerous enough to cause tens of thousands of deaths a year in this country. The state of Florida has an interest in ensuring that such permits are not transferable. Its insistence on a full facial shot to guarantee nontransferability would seem warranted." Further, Caldwell worried that "Sultaana Freeman with a bag over her head is a dead ringer for—let's take a sometime Florida resident at random here—Mohammed Atta with a bag over his head." CAIR was of a different opinion. Ibrahim Hooper compared the requirement that Freeman remove her *niqab* for the photo to forcing women to remove their blouses—in other words, a gross invasion of privacy.

While I think that Caldwell and company have the better part of this argument, it broaches the interesting question of what constitutes reasonable accommodation of the faith of Muslims. This is a question that CAIR intends to force. It has lent support to Freeman and others who want to sue the government to allow Islamic garb to be worn on the job. CAIR tries to paint its demands in non-sectarian terms—it has even gone so far as to protest the demotion to a desk job of an Illinois Jewish cop, who refused to remove his yarmulke—but it is clear that this active and vocal Muslim presence in the U.S. will probably have to lead to some reassessment of what religious freedom would mean, as extended to Muslims.

In fact, most of the objections to CAIR come down to a simple question: Are Islam and America compatible? Here the name of the organization (to remind, "The Council on American Islamic Relations") is quite appropriate.

In light of Sept. 11 and the many terrorist attacks by fundamentalist Muslims in the year and a half since, the question of the compatibility between Islam and the West is one that many Americans have puzzled on. The U.S. government itself swings this way one day and that on another. President Bush insists that Islam is a "religion of peace" and has resisted calls to have border and airport security use racial or religious profiling, but his government has been particularly hard on Muslim newcomers. Though it may have slipped off the radar screen, several hundred immigrants were arrested not too long after the dust had settled and many of these are still in jail. The Justice Department refuses to list their names, and the courts have agreed to let the proceedings take place in secret—often without the aid of lawyers.

CAIR may be acting out of self-interest when it regularly rails against these secret proceedings, but this may be beside the point. Tim Cavanaugh argues that the group provides a valuable public service by keeping "close track of the war on terrorism's erosion of civil liberties, if only because its constituents are directly impacted." More important is the role that CAIR will play in redrawing the social bargain in the United States, as religious allegiances are balanced against a long-term war on that amorphous beast known as "terrorism." It's a safe bet that pluralism will never be the same again. ■

Jeremy Lott is a staff writer for the Report, a Canadian magazine of news and opinion. He lives in Washington state.

Arts & Letters

FILM

[25th Hour]

The Longest Day

By Steve Sailer

WHAT WOULD YOU DO if your son had one day left before his seven-year prison term began? Or what if he were your oldest buddy? Your boyfriend? Your subordinate who could rat you out to the Feds? What if he were you?

In Spike Lee's "25th Hour," Edward Norton portrays a 31-year-old New Yorker on whom the prison doors are about to slam shut. After weak performances in "Death to Smoochy" and "Red Dragon," the two-time Oscar nominee is back on form.

Norton plays a thoughtful, rather likeable yuppie who has messed up badly, leaving himself with three choices: go on the lam forever, kill himself, or endure an over-crowded maximum-security prison where his boyish WASP looks will likely attract unwanted attention.

There are three basic types of male lead roles. The first is the masculine icon: the enviably but impossibly strong (Arnold Schwarzenegger) or attractive (Tom Cruise) movie star whom every fellow in the audience would like to be.

Norton isn't cut out for that. He pumped himself up to play a massive skinhead in "American History X," but his natural body is wiry and his face resembles an overgrown chipmunk's.

The second kind is the character lead, the interesting personality that the audience enjoys watching but would not

want to be. Norton claims his model is Dustin Hoffman's loveable loser Ratso Rizzo in "Midnight Cowboy."

In "25th Hour," though, Norton delivers a fine version of the third archetype, the easy-to-identify-with regular guy (what Tom Hanks plays). In classic cowboy movies, this would be Jimmy Stewart's part, not John Wayne's masculine icon or Walter Brennan's character roles.

Most men can relate a little to Norton's situation. We have all given some thought to just how we would manage if—God forbid—the time ever came to hop into the proverbial white Bronco and make a break for the border. I hated "Thelma and Louise" when I first saw it because the women botched their escape to Mexico so badly. (They started in Arkansas and fell into the Grand Canyon.) Obviously, they did not have a plan worked out years before, like any red-blooded American man would.

Before our felon makes his final decision, though, there are people he wants to see:

- His heartbroken retired fireman father (Brian Cox, the screenwriting guru in "Adaptation"), an on-the-wagon alcoholic who blames himself for letting his beloved son go wrong;
- His best friend, a brash Wall Street broker (Barry Pepper, Roger Maris in HBO's "61*"), who thinks Norton deserves what he's getting;
- His next closest friend, a pudgy, shy English teacher (the great Philip Seymour Hoffman) paralyzed by a potentially catastrophic crush on his 17-year-old student (Anna Paquin of "The Piano").

Paquin is lively and Hoffman (best known as rock critic Lester Bangs in "Almost Famous") once again disap-

pears into his role. (In good news, Hoffman is rumored to be the first choice to play Ignatius J. Reilly, the quixotic anti-hero of the famous comic novel "A Confederacy of Dunces," which may finally be emerging from 23 years in development hell.)

Then, there is Norton's pampered girlfriend (Rosario Dawson), whom he is not sure he wants to see, since she may have sent him up the river.

Finally, there are the people desperate to see him: a strung-out ex-customer and the scary Brighton Beach gangsters who supplied him heroin. (In his movie debut, 340-pound NFL nose guard Tony Siragusa makes a surprisingly credible Ukrainian enforcer.)

And that is the problem with "25th Hour." Just as Hanks's role as a good-hearted hitman in "Road to Perdition" was misconceived, here the protagonist's crime is too vicious, too sustained, and too vivid to harmonize with Norton's portrayal of an everyman who made a mistake.

The heroin business is not a one-time screw-up. It is a career. Heroin dealers kill their customers by facilitating overdoses and AIDS. And, if the junkies don't pay what they owe, the dealers kill them with guns to encourage the others to pay up. Novelist and screenwriter David Benioff should have assigned Norton's character the Wall Street job, where he could have embezzled millions from abstract victims, while telling himself he was still an OK guy.

This oversight is unfortunate because Benioff's dialogue provides the expert cast with some ferocious scenes. And no one is better at staging harsh arguments between New Yorkers than director Spike Lee.

His visual choices are more questionable, however. Lee imposes a stuttering rhythm on the editing, with lots of gratu-

itous cuts, some jumping forward a second in time, some backward to replay a moment from a different angle. This might have added interest to a weaker screenplay, but the situation and dialogue here is so strong it seems a distraction. ■

Rated R for strong language and some violence.
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BOOKS

[Benjamin Franklin, Edmund S. Morgan, Yale University Press, 339 pages]

The Wisdom of a Founder

By H.A. Scott Trask

THE HUNGARIAN-BORN American historian John Lukacs writes in *Historical Consciousness* that one of primary reasons to write and study history is "the reduction of untruth." He had in mind the need to reclaim the truth of the past in an age of ideology and falsehood.

Lukacs believes that the secret of the creative genius of the ancient Greeks was their conviction that the pursuit of truth was more important than the pursuit of justice. "The pursuit of justice can be a terrible thing, laying the world waste (and isn't this a peculiarly American inclination?)," while "the pursuit of truth is life-giving." Their curiosity and love of truth led the Greeks to philosophy, science, and history; the Americans' love of "justice" leads them to endless crusades and perpetual war.

Lukacs notes that the Greek word for history, *historia*, translates as "research" or "inquiry." He discerns "an important and profound relationship ... between the traditions of historical and philosophical and of artistic realism, between the realistic purpose of representation by a Pheidias [the sculptor] and by a

Thucydides [the historian]." All the great Western historians have conceived their mission as realistic truth-telling about the past. The German historian Von Ranke urged his colleagues to write history *wie es eigentlich gewesen* ("as it really happened").

For Lukacs, "historical thinking" is "inseparable from a certain realistic view of human nature." In his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides wrote, "The absence of romance in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it ..." Americans desperately want to believe otherwise. Woodrow Wilson led his countrymen into the European cauldron promising that it was "the war to end all wars." George W. Bush promises that his crusade against terrorism will rid the world of "terrorism," evil, and result in "lasting peace."

Edmund S. Morgan is one of the deans of American colonial historians. He is the author of *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (1974) and numerous books about the Puritans. His biography of Benjamin Franklin offers an excellent introduction to a man who would be remembered had there been no Revolution but whose contribution to American independence was perhaps greater than any other. Franklin (1706-1790) was born in Boston, but he moved to Philadelphia where he became a successful printer, newspaper editor, and civic leader (1727-57). He wrote the immensely popular *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1732). He was a scientist whose discoveries and experiments with electricity made him famous in Europe. While living in England as the colonial agent of Pennsylvania (1757-1762), he planned and supervised the placement of lightning rods (his invention) to guard the royal arsenal at Purfleet.

Franklin's role in the unfolding American Revolution is justly famous. From

1764 to 1775, he was the principal spokesman and representative for the colonies in England. (Officially, he was the colonial agent for Pennsylvania and later for Massachusetts and New Jersey.) After returning to Philadelphia, he was elected to the Continental Congress, served on the committee of five appointed to write the Declaration of Independence, and helped draft the revolutionary constitution for his state.

His colleagues knew that Franklin could best serve his country as a diplomat, as no American was better known or more respected in Europe. In late 1776, Congress sent Franklin and two other envoys to Europe on a mission to obtain arms, supplies, money, and allies. Franklin negotiated and signed two treaties with the French in 1778, creating a formal military alliance between the two countries. Congress responded by making him sole minister to France. During the war, Franklin used his prestige, popularity, and persuasive powers to acquire crucial loans from the French government. He was also the chief negotiator of the treaty with England that ended the war in 1782.

Morgan contrasts Franklin's talents and signal service with those of the bungling, arrogant, and self-righteous John Adams. Adams offended the French with his peremptory demand for funds and his unsolicited advice about their military and foreign policies. Regrettably, modern American diplomacy is more like Adams than Franklin.

Morgan reminds us that the American Revolution was not inevitable. Franklin considered himself both English and American, and he loved the British Empire. His life-long desire was not political independence but rather an Anglo-American empire in which the Americans had an equal part. During the Albany Congress of 1754, Franklin proposed a Plan of Union for the colonies that would have created a colonial parliament whose legislative authority was limited only by the king and his appointed agent. It was a far-seeing plan, and had it been supported by both the colonies and the English government,

the Americans might long have remained a part of the empire. While he was in London, he used all his influence to avert revolution and restore harmony between England and her North American colonies. He tried to persuade important figures in government that the key to preserving the loyalty and affection of the colonies was for Parliament to relinquish its authority over them. If they insisted on their right to tax them, then they should allow the Americans to send representatives to Parliament. The haughty and imperious English, however, scorned the kind of constitutional reform that would have secured the loyalty and affection of North America.

Another colonial historian, Charles Andrews, once observed that "the colonists were not contending for democracy, popular government, or universal suffrage. They had what they wanted of these things." Morgan's study of Franklin confirms that the Americans took up arms, not for some ideological abstraction, but for national independence and self-government. As a separate people, they believed they had a right to govern themselves, and when the Crown would not grant them self-rule *within* the empire, they decided to secede from that empire.

Students are taught today either that America was founded as a diverse country or that the founders intended it to become so. It would have been news to Franklin. He was opposed to German immigration to Pennsylvania during the 1740s and '50s. He wanted his country to remain predominantly English and Scottish, and the large numbers of Germans flooding into his city troubled him. He even objected that the complexion of the newcomers (who were mostly Rhineland German) was too dark! Now if Franklin objected to admitting large numbers of German immigrants, who were Christian and European, what would he think of the United States' current immigration policy?

Franklin was a true democrat who believed that republican government

should reflect the will of the majority. The 1776 Pennsylvania state constitution, which he helped write, established a plural executive (with no veto power) and a unicameral legislature. Whether he was serving as a state assemblyman, a colonial agent, or an envoy abroad, Franklin believed that his duty was to carry out the wishes of his constituents, whether he agreed with them or not. Modern American politicians believe quite differently. As long as their re-election is not in danger, elected officials today could not care less what the majority of their constituents believe or want. With unelected federal judges serving for life, unaccountable bureaucrats, powerful special interest lobbies, and professional pollsters, the current American system is based on the very un-republican notion that the public is unfit to govern itself.

Franklin would have been horrified at the modern American doctrine of total war. He believed it was wrong to make war on civilians. He regarded the impressment of seamen, the seizure of private merchant vessels, naval blockades, and the burning or looting of farms, homes, and towns as barbarism. In negotiating alliances and treaties, he tried and failed to insert provisions outlawing these practices.

Although Franklin believed in free trade and minimal government, he was also a territorial expansionist who believed that most of North America (Canada, Nova Scotia, even Bermuda and the Bahamas) should be incorporated into the American confederation of republics. He supported the 1775 American invasion of Quebec, and during the peace negotiations he tried (naïvely) to persuade the English to cede *all* their North American possessions.

If Franklin had lived another ten years, he almost certainly would have become a Jeffersonian Republican. Both were men of the Enlightenment, both were Francophiles, both were authentic republicans and patriots, and both wished to see their country expand while its government remained small and limited. If he lived today, it is hard

not to see him organizing the militia for a second revolution, this time against a domestic tyranny. ■

H.A. Scott Trask has a Ph.D. in history and is currently a Kurzweg fellow at the Ludwig Von Mises Institute. He has just finished a political study of the nineteenth-century political economist Condé Raguet. He is now working on a study of William Graham Sumner and a book on the Northern peace movement during the Civil War.

[U.S. National Defense for the Twenty-First Century: The Grand Exit Strategy, Edward A. Olsen, Frank Cass Publishers, 210 pages]

Stepping Back from the Brink

By Doug Bandow

AMERICA IS RUSHING TO WAR with Iraq, but whether this represents the new rule of preemption or an exception to the older doctrine of containment remains unclear. In either case, a serious debate over U.S. foreign policy is long overdue.

Hoping to spark such a discussion is Edward Olsen, a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School and former State Department analyst. Though America may be the world's sole superpower, ready for war in Iraq, Olsen argues, today is a moment to disengage not dominate.

Olsen reaches back to the Cold War, when Washington's goals were obviously worthy, to criticize U.S. policy. But over time, he complains, "those goals were profoundly distorted." Not only was there a disproportionate emphasis on military strategies, but "maintenance of alliances and protection of allies became more important than the focus on why Americans require allies." In short, the means became the end.

Yet for the five decades following World War II, "with the major exception of U.S.-Canadian relations there has never been a military situation where one can argue convincingly that any of these other allies were truly essential to the territorial national security of the United States." Of course, Washington was concerned that such countries not lean against America: "But the predominant reason the United States valued them as 'allies' over the longer term stemmed from the residual psychology of World War II. Allies were deemed to be an intrinsic good. They had axiomatic value that did not have to be proven."

This profoundly important point is relevant today. Even if the alliances were needed during the Cold War, they are not needed now. America stands astride the globe as a colossus; Washington is allied with every major industrialized country, and its adversaries are a small band of dispirited wrecks. Writes Olsen: "Most of the 'enemies' confronting the United States today are the product of an overactive imagination coupled with bureaucratic creativity."

The result is costly hubris. In dominating the globe as did Rome, Washington thought it could act without consequence. Back Israel against the Pales-

tinians. Intervene in a civil war in Lebanon. Arrest warlords and fix a failed state in Somalia. Invade Haiti. Successively back Iraq against Iran and Kuwait against Iraq in the Gulf. Buttress the Saudi dictatorship. Take sides in a series of civil wars in the Balkans. Attempt to dictate to nations around the globe policies ranging from nonproliferation to trade.

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 proved that America was not invulnerable. And in a world in which China and India become more powerful, Europe grows apart, and other states rise, the U.S. might find itself facing unusual constraints in the future. In short, writes Olsen, Washington's current military posture "is extravagant, imprudent and gratuitously risky."

Alas, Washington's policy today is dominated by those who glory in such extravagance, imprudence, and risk. Indeed, every setback only causes them to push for more. Hike military spending by tens or hundreds of billions annually. Initiate war against Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and whoever else resists American instructions. Police civil wars, social disorders, and ethnic discord wherever they occur.

And today it is conservatives who are leading the campaign to turn the U.S. into a new imperial power. Despite the disappearance of the Soviet Union, Warsaw Pact, and hegemonic communism, Republicans maintain a barrage of criticism for any cut in military outlays.

However, notes Olsen, "Such knee-jerk conservative responses are entirely predictable and thoroughly unwarranted. They are the residue of Cold War-style thinking. There was nothing wrong with post-Cold War defense cuts, but they should have been paired with mission cuts."

With both liberals and conservatives committed to international social engineering, Olsen takes on the critical opposition role. He offers an alternative of non-intervention, though he refuses to flinch at the many terms of opprobrium tossed by the other side: neo-isolationism, Fortress America, and the like. At its core, Olsen's policy prescription is to defend the U.S., not its allies. The allies are not important for America's security; moreover, they do nothing to defend America.

Although Olsen does not directly enter the debate over Iraq, it offers dramatic confirmation of his critique: despite Washington's claim that the regime of Saddam Hussein threatens vital interests, only Great Britain backs America with any enthusiasm, and its military aid will be marginal. Others range from wary reluctance to hostile opposition. President Bush has been reduced to asking the new NATO members, such as Latvia, to help depose Saddam Hussein.

And it is here that Olsen poses his most significant challenge. Today's policymakers simply assume the value of one-way defense guarantees for a host of populous and prosperous states. These commitments are constantly being increased through NATO's expansion—the alliance's new members have no serious military capabilities but many controversies that could incite conflict.

New ties in East Asia could have the same deleterious security impact for America. As he aptly writes, "It may be



GLASBERGEN

"You were my imaginary friend, we had some great times. But I haven't heard from you since I was five years old and now you show up and expect me to give you a job?"

better to fight wars on someone else's turf than on our own, but it is far better not to fight or deter them on their soil at all, if Americans are confident that the United States will not be forced to wage war on U.S. territory."

Olsen is not merely interested in theory. Much of his book is devoted to how to put into effect "a grand exit strategy." His most tangential recommendations are the most dubious—instituting universal military training, for instance, even as he would shrink the military; and continued foreign aid, even though experience has demonstrated that it offers few benefits to anyone other than elites in donor agencies and recipient states.

Very helpful is his extended discussion, region by region, of how to disengage. His objection to NATO expansion is not expansion, but American membership. The alliance should be Europeanized, he argues, and could include Russia. Indeed, he writes, "This would be facilitated were today's Russian Federation to go the way of the Soviet Union, enabling its European constituent parts to join the European Union and NATO."

Other alliances are not so simple but could move in the same direction over time. (Olsen, an East Asian specialist, has simultaneously published a short volume on U.S.-Korean relations: *Toward Normalizing U.S.-Korea Relations: In Due Course?*) Here, too, old alliances are outdated: for instance, South Korea has 40 times the GDP and twice the population of its decrepit northern neighbor. Against what is America defending? Olsen wants "to normalize U.S.-Korea interactions."

This means North as well as South Korea, a controversial notion at a time when the former has been characterized as a member of the "axis of evil" and has restarted its nuclear program. Yet the North has moved out of hermitic isolation in recent years.

He suggests turning Korea policy over to the Koreans. Particularly important is "modifying the U.S.-ROK alliance in ways that induce far more bilateral

equality and reciprocity in the forms of defense burden-sharing and policy decision-sharing." He foresees eventual American military disengagement. As he puts it: "Although U.S. and Korean citizens have become accustomed to a certain level of entanglement, there are viable alternative means for preserving peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula that do not require such a degree of U.S. involvement."

In sum, the best form of U.S. leadership would be to back off, allowing other countries to confront issues of greatest interest to them. Olsen's America would no longer treat every international crisis as a U.S. crisis.

He is even willing to take on the "the most entangling quasi-alliance the United States has," Israel. It obviously does not need American financial aid to defend itself, and the relationship offers no security benefits to the U.S. Given Arab hostility, notes Olsen: "Less obvious, but all too real is the inability of the United States to actually call on Israeli military support or basing access in the event of U.S. involvement in a war elsewhere in the Middle East." Here, as elsewhere, a supposed American ally is actually a security black hole.

Olsen's prescription for disengagement undoubtedly seems idiosyncratic in a world where successive U.S. administrations have increased foreign commitments and military spending. Yet he is pointing out that the emperor has no clothes, that the bedrock of U.S. foreign policy—the protection of allies—does not advance American security interests.

He emphasizes that his policy is not one of pacifism. Nor even neutrality *à la* Switzerland. Rather, he explains, "Maintaining a strong national defense capability and the will to use that capability if the United States is attacked, hardly qualifies as pacifism. It does, however, sharply restrict the definition of what must occur for a war to be deemed a 'just war' in the United States' national interests."

This is even more important in the world that exists after 9/11. As Olsen

observes, "It is a profound commentary about the state of U.S. homeland defense preparedness that U.S. armed forces deployed around the world were far better positioned, trained and funded for the defense of various locations in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East than for defending the headquarters of the U.S. armed forces at the Pentagon." The best way to have prevented those attacks would be "if the main priority for the United States had been true homeland defense."

In the dozen years since the Cold War ended, defenders of the *status quo* have managed to preserve most of America's commitments and forces by chanting the mantra that we continue to live in a dangerous world. But both enemy threats and allied capabilities have changed dramatically. True, advocates of an American imperium have ably used Sept. 11 to advance their ends, including justifying an aggressive war against Iraq, a former U.S. ally contained and constrained for a decade, which has not threatened this nation. Nevertheless, he adds: "In due course, after American demands for retaliation, justice and vengeance are satisfied, it will be feasible for the United States to reconsider what made the world's sole superpower so vulnerable in terms of homeland defense."

Olsen's book presents a potent challenge to those who envision America taking on quasi-imperial powers, and this challenge to the sclerotic *status quo* demands a response. For, as he warns, "the longer Americans wait and the more Americans dissipate their assets and sovereignty through entangling globalist commitments, the more difficult it will be" to change course. ■

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[*Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity: The Challenge of Bioethics*, Leon Kass, Encounter Books, 313 pages]

Pulling the Plug on Bioethics

By Francis J. Beckwith

"STATECRAFT," ARISTOTLE WISELY instructed his pupils, "is soulcraft," by which he meant that the moral premises embedded in the social and legal fabric of a political regime provide direction and sustenance for the character and beliefs of its citizens. That is, what is tacitly accepted by a people and its institutions, in its practices and principles, will tell us more about what it embraces as good, true, and beautiful than all of its verbal declarations to the contrary.

Like a 21st-century Aristotle, Dr. Leon Kass, in *Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity*, convincingly shows that the way by which we have been instructed by our intellectual class to assess contemporary moral and policy questions surrounding life and death betrays an understanding of human nature and dignity that is deeply flawed, and not readily apparent to the untutored mind. Appointed in 2001 by President George W. Bush to be the chairman of the President's Council on Bioethics (PCB), Dr. Kass, in this remarkably readable book, tutors us, and he does so with insight and wisdom that is all too uncommon among his peers. He argues that bioethical issues, and the questions they raise, will never be addressed adequately if we continue to ignore that it is philosophical anthropology (and not science or ethics) that is doing all the intellectual work. For, in the words of Dr. Kass, "[a]nswers depend ... on a proper anthropology, one that richly understands what it means to be a human animal, in our bodily, psychic, social, cultural, political and spiritual dimensions." As an illustration, consider just two issues, among many, that Dr. Kass

discusses in his book: physician-assisted suicide (PAS) and human cloning.

He points out that those who support PAS often do so on the ground of self-autonomy, a doctrine that implicitly abandons the notion of moral justification. According to the principle of self-autonomy, free and equal citizens have the right to do whatever they want to themselves as long as they do not interfere with the same rights of other free and equal citizens. But this MTV-philosophy is no creed for any thoughtful adult seeking moral wisdom. Consider a simple example. If we are all free and equal, then my neighbor and I are equal to each other. Therefore, if it is wrong to kill my neighbor without justification, then it would be wrong to kill myself without justification, even if I wanted to do so and would not deprive others of the same right to self-autonomy. Consequently, if I kill my neighbor because he is bald and I think the bald should die, that would not constitute justification for killing him. If, however, the murderer is not me but the neighbor himself, the killing still would not be permissible, because the reason for the suicide would be the same as that for the murder and therefore it still would be unjustified.

UNLIKE A NEW MICROWAVE, A CLONE OF ONE'S DECEASED CHILD IS NOT REALLY A REPLACEMENT.

If the American regime assimilated this libertarian doctrine into its jurisprudential tapestry, it would be teaching something contrary to what its laws, institutions, and founding documents presuppose—the equality and dignity of all citizens—even if its "bioethicists" continue to assert otherwise. In the words of Dr. Kass, "Supremely tolerant of the rights of others to their own eccentricities, we avert our glance and turn the other moral cheek. Here at last is the only possible philosophical ground for the right to die: arbitrary will, backed by moral relativism. Which is to say, no ground at all."

Consider now the issue of human cloning. Unlike other forms of reproductive assistance, cloning allows one to choose the particular genome for one's offspring." Dr. Kass points out that this sort of control over, and selection of, another's genome may result in viewing the produced child-clone as made rather than begotten. That is, human cloning will have more in common with manufacturing than procreating, and this will lead people to begin to think of these children (and perhaps non-cloned children as well) as commodities selected for their attributes rather than as persons who should be valued for their own sake. Commodities stand in an object-subject relation to their owners and their makers; that is, commodities, by virtue of their nature, are inferior to the subjects who make and own them. On the other hand, moral agents stand in a subject-subject relation to other moral agents including their parents, spouses, children, and siblings. Commodities are replaceable, while moral agents are not. You can always get a new microwave oven to replace the defective one, but a clone of one's deceased child is not really a replacement. "[I]n clonal reproduction, and in the more advanced forms of

manufacture to which it will lead," writes Dr. Kass, "we give existence to a being not by what we are, but by what we intend and design." "In human cloning," he continues, "scientists and prospective 'parents' adopt a technocratic attitude toward human children, as their artifacts. Such an arrangement is profoundly dehumanizing, no matter how good the product."

But there is a twist for the producers and the consumers—the scientists, the parents, the society—in this anthropological plot, for the practice of cloning, and other forms of embryo manipulation, runs the risk of corrupting them:

Fewer people are yet worried about the effects not on the embryos but on our embryo-using society of coming to look at nascent human life as a natural resource to be mined, exploited, and commodified. The little embryos are merely destroyed, but we—the users—are at risk of corruption. We are desensitized and denatured by a coarsening of sensibility that comes to regard these practices as natural, ordinary, and fully unproblematic. People who hold nascent human life in their hands coolly and without awe have deadened something in their souls.

It will surprise some readers to discover that they will find themselves (as I did) disagreeing with Dr. Kass's opinion on the moral status of the human embryo. Although he deplores, and argues convincingly against, the moral premises that are employed to justify human cloning, abortion, and embryo experimentation, he cannot bring himself to argue that the early embryo is fully one of us, that it is a full-fledged member of the human community and therefore is no less a member than its post-natal brethren. Acknowledging the human origin and potentiality of the early embryo, and maintaining that it is "not humanly nothing" because "it possesses a power to become what everyone will agree is a human being," Dr. Kass writes:

Granting that a human life begins at fertilization and develops via a continuous process thereafter, surely—one might say—the blastocyst itself can hardly be considered a human being. I myself would agree that a blastocyst is not, in a *full* sense, a human being—or what current fashion calls, rather arbitrarily and without clear definition, a person. It does not look like a human being nor can it do very much of what human beings do.

Although there are numerous thinkers who have responded to this sort of argument (including Dr. Kass's PCB colleague, Robert P. George), one

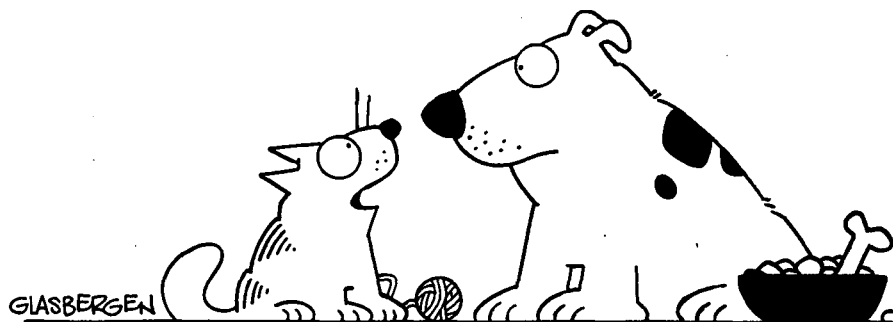
need not look farther for a rebuttal than Dr. Kass himself, who writes, in a subsequent chapter in the same book: "I advance the position of psychophysical unity, a position that regards a human being as largely, if not wholly, self-identical with his enlivened body."

But if a human being maintains absolute identity through change, then one's post-natal self is identical to one's embryonic self. Therefore, if one claims that human beings have intrinsic dignity as long as they exist, and that a human being is a substance that endures over time while undergoing change throughout her life—from conception until natural death—then whatever is true of her dignity post-natally was also true of her dignity in prior days, even on the first day. The actualization of a human being's potentials—that is, her "human" appearance and the exercise of her rational and moral powers as an adult—are merely the public presentation of functions latent in every human substance from the moment it comes into being that it may lose and regain throughout its life. A German Shepherd dog, for example, because it has a particular nature, has the capacity to develop the ability to bark. It may die as a puppy and never develop that ability. Regardless, it is still a German Shepherd dog as long as it exists because it is a substance with a particular nature, even if it never acquires certain functions that by nature it has the capacity to develop. In contrast, a frog is not said to lack something if it cannot bark, for it is by nature not the sort of substance that can have the ability to bark. A dog that lacks the ability to bark is still a dog because of its nature. A

human being who lacks the present ability to think rationally (either because she is too young or she suffers from a disability) is still a human being because of her nature. A human being's lack makes sense if and only if she is an actual human being. Consequently, a blastocyst (or embryo, or fetus, or infant, or adolescent) is not a potential human being, but rather, a human being with great potential. Dr. Kass seems on the verge of accepting this position—so much so that he is on the side of the angels on virtually every bioethical question.

There is so much that Dr. Kass covers in this book—including many wonderful and illuminating insights—that this review simply cannot do it justice. For example, his discussion of the permanent limits of biology and its uncritical incorporation of philosophical materialism in its theory and practice is alone worth the price of the book. Although one may find oneself disagreeing with Dr. Kass on occasion, one will never cease to be impressed with, and sometimes moved by, his winsome discourse and deep understanding of medicine, science, and philosophical anthropology. *Life, Liberty, and the Defense of Dignity* should be required reading for anyone who is concerned about the numerous issues that come under the heading "bioethics." ■

Francis J. Beckwith is Madison Research Fellow in the Department of Politics, Princeton University. His most recent book is Law, Darwinism, and Public Education: The Establishment Clause and the Challenge of Intelligent Design (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003)



"I belong to a cult that believes cats have nine lives."

A Tale of Two Cities

Sticks and stones no longer count; it's words that land one in trouble—at least in the tight little island that is modern Britain, far removed from the green

and pleasant land I chose to live in thirty-five years ago.

But before I go on, a bit of nostalgia: After leaving the University of Virginia in 1956, I moved to Paris. The City of Light, according to Papa Hemingway, is, like an older mistress, a necessary part of a young man's education. At twenty, one indeed dreams of older women, and Paris in 1956 was full of them: chic, sophisticated, and beautiful females, mostly French, but also many South Americans as well as Scandinavians. (When I say older, I mean in their late twenties or early thirties.) There was nothing quite like the recently recovered from the war Paris of the Fifties. London was bleak and stuffy, Rome provincial, and Berlin was, well, partly occupied and under pressure from you know who. Paris was it. Fashion had come back with a vengeance, De Gaulle had brought order by 1958, Malraux had beautified the city, and I was a young man on the tennis circuit looking for fun.

I shared a flat with two Argentine polo players off the Avenue Foch—La Residence du Bois—a beautiful 19th century family house run by a wonderful lady, just like in old-fashioned black and white movies. It took Carlos and Enrique ten years to convince me to change sports, and I was fortunate enough to then join them and the great Dominican playboy Porfirio Rubirosa in making up a team that won more female hearts than trophies, although we did manage to win quite a lot of matches in between other pursuits.

They say it takes about ten years after a world war for people to stop feeling guilty and start enjoying themselves. Parisians began a frenzied run of festivities and balls once the Algerian conflict came to an end in 1962. April, May, and June were one long party, as were October and November. The place was crawling with Brazilian tycoons, Argentine oligarchs, Bolivian tin magnates, Greek shipowners, and rich American expatriates. The Brits were broke—in any case, they never spend money—the Germans too insecure to show off, the Russians enslaved, the Italians just starting to branch out, the Scandinavians too uptight to matter.

AS IN PARIS, I WAS HAPPY LIVING IN ENGLAND. I MADE COUNTLESS FRIENDS, BUILT A CAREER, AND ENJOYED A WAY OF LIFE THAT WAS UNIQUELY BRITISH. NO LONGER.

It is difficult to describe the fun. One got up early after four hours of sleep, worked the ponies in the Bagatelle Polo Club in the Bois de Boulogne (and sweated out the hangover), lunched in town, went back for tennis practice and a swim in the club, and then got ready for the evening's activities. It was an empty life, definitely a useless one, but one I wouldn't trade for all the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, especially as there are none.

The end of the fun came rather suddenly. Some students at Nanterre Univer-

sity decided to revolt because they were not allowed to share campus digs with their girlfriends. Leave it to the French to revolt because they wanted to make love rather than to stop war. The only good thing to come out of the May '68 "revolution" was that I decided the party was over and it was time to go to work.

Journalism beckoned, and London became my base because of the language. Swinging Sixties London aside, Britain was still a very traditional country in 1968. Self-restraint, rather than draconian laws, was key to the most civilized and crime-free society in Europe. As Peter Hitchens writes, "Unborn babies were safe from being butchered. Little children were far less likely to be deserted by their parents and dumped in the nightmare of 'care.' People were safe in their homes, and there were no guns. We still governed ourselves, made

our own laws ... we could throw the Government out at the next election." As in Paris, I was happy living in England. I made countless friends, built a career, and enjoyed a way of life that was uniquely British. No longer.

The rot had begun with the catastrophic immigration policies of successive Tory and Labour governments, centralization and European Union directives, and the fall of Margaret Thatcher, but went into overdrive when Tony Blair came to power in 1997. Far from a civilized society, Britain is now

the most uncivilized, lawless, and badly-governed country in Europe, with a bleak, disenfranchised countryside, filthy and dangerous cities, a Health Service and transport system that are the worst in Europe, a crime rate that is the highest in Europe, and an asylum system which has become mass immigration under another name.

Last week, on a brief visit, I ran into many friends, but the sense of gloom was as bad as the weather. Tony Blair can win elections through sheer demagoguery, but he certainly has no idea how to run a country. His government has lost the plot on education, on prisons, the health service, the transport system. All government services are in a state of chaos. Britain is now a haven for gangsters and racketeers from all over the world—Jamaican drug dealers, Kosovar gun smugglers, and Albanians running prostitution empires. Even ex-Taliban soldiers who fought against British troops are seeking asylum and receiving benefits while their cases are being processed.

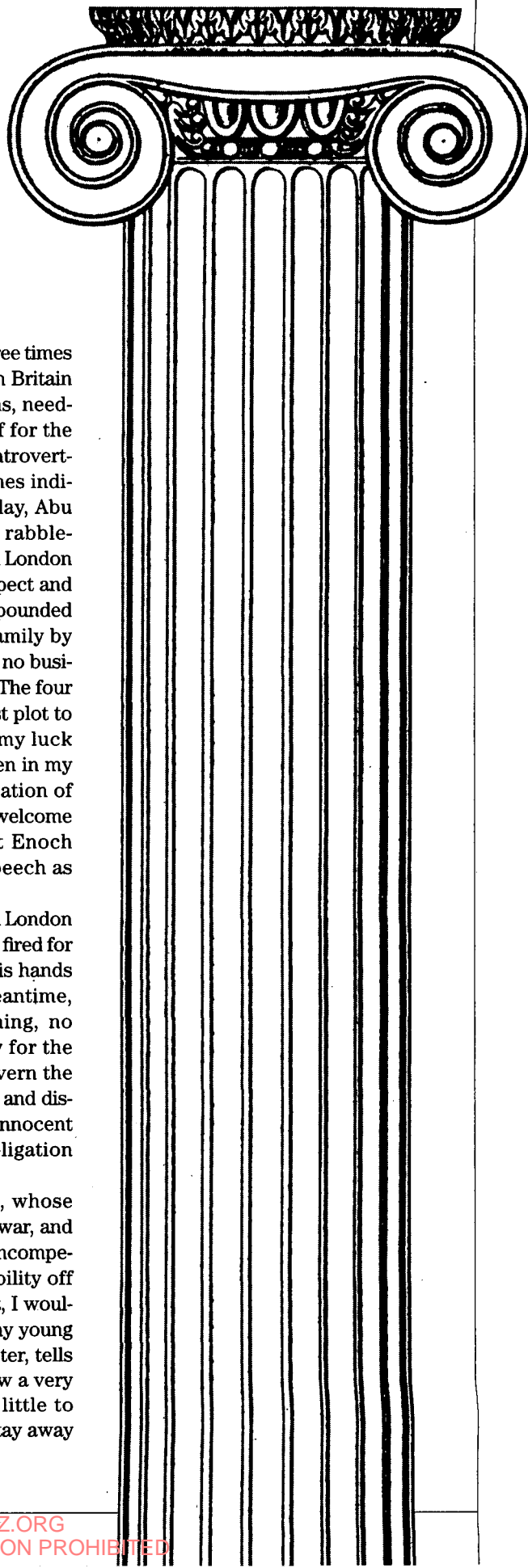
Last month, Britain's top judge sent a signal to the courts about how burglars should be treated. His preposterous edict was that burglars should not be jailed and that it's all a question of the degree to which the crime is aggravated. This was one Lord Woolf. His direct superior, Lord Irvine, a lawyer crony ennobled by Blair, had loftily announced that most people did not want to see violent thieves jailed. With 72,000 people behind bars, Britain's jails are bursting, ergo the buffoon's solution: no more jail for two- and three-time losers.

And it gets worse. While I was there, a police officer was stabbed to death by an Algerian asylum seeker who had

already been refused asylum three times but had been allowed to stay in Britain pending appeal. The politicians, needless to say, paraded their grief for the cameras but ignored the incontrovertible fact that they were the ones indirectly responsible. The next day, Abu Hamza, a notorious Muslim rabble-rouser who preaches at a North London mosque where the murder suspect and his three cohorts worship, compounded the agony of the slain cop's family by announcing that the police had no business raiding the suspect's flat. (The four are also suspected of a terrorist plot to spread the poison ricin). As my luck would have it, I had just written in my *Spectator* column that repatriation of criminal minorities would be a welcome change and quoted the great Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech as prophetic and true.

The result was predictable. A London *Times* journalist demanded I be fired for racism. My superior washed his hands but did not fire me. In the meantime, Abu Hamza went on preaching, no politician took responsibility for the murder, and the elite who govern the British people took a tea break and discussed—I am sure—how the innocent have, in fact, some sort of obligation towards the guilty.

Welcome to Blair's Britain, whose government is itching to go to war, and rightly so. War will take their incompetence and criminal irresponsibility off the front pages. Had I known it, I would have stood in bed, in Paris, but my young son, now living there as a painter, tells me that the City of Light is now a very dangerous mistress and has little to teach a young man except to stay away from Arab neighborhoods. ■



What's on the minds of today's leading conservatives?



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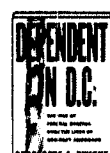
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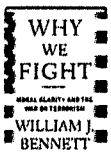
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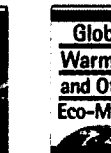
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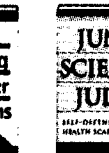
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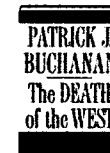
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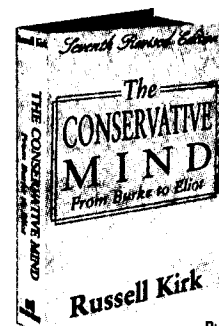
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"But the conservatives, who never abandoned the idea of community, still retain vitality, and with them lies the hope for arresting the might of political totalitarianism."

— Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*

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